



Peer-Review Report Form

Manuscript Title:	Assessing the Influence of Digital Skills on Perceived Academic Performance of CBA Students: Mediation by College Environment
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The reviewers acknowledge the significance of your manuscript and recommend several revisions to further improve its clarity, coherence, organization, and overall scholarly quality. In addition, you are advised to thoroughly review and validate all references included in the manuscript. Please ensure that all cited sources are accurate, accessible, and retrievable through Google Scholar to uphold the credibility and reliability of the study. Additionally, make sure to include the DOI or website link for every reference to facilitate verification and accessibility of sources. Furthermore, only sources that are cited within the manuscript should appear in the References section, and all entries listed in the References section must also be cited in the text. For example, if 20 unique sources are cited in the manuscript, then only those 20 sources should be included in the References section. Please note that repeated citations of the same source within the text are counted as a single reference entry; therefore, the total number of references may be lower than the total number of in-text citations.

Reviewer 1

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The manuscript discusses a relevant topic, especially as digital skills are now important in business education. The use of PLS-SEM is also appropriate for testing the proposed relationships. However, the paper still needs stronger conceptual clarity and more careful reporting of the model before the findings can be fully trusted.

<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
The hypotheses and results are not consistently presented. In the literature and framework, H2 appears to refer to digital skills influencing college environment, while H3 refers to college environment influencing perceived academic performance. However, in the results table, these are interchanged. This is a major issue because it creates confusion in interpreting which hypothesis was actually tested and supported.
The mediation analysis needs to be reported more rigorously. The study states that college environment mediates the relationship, but it does not clearly explain whether this is partial or full mediation. Since the direct effect of digital skills on perceived academic performance is still



significant, the authors should discuss this as partial mediation and provide clearer mediation evidence such as confidence intervals, total effect, and variance accounted for.

The measurement model needs more clarification. Digital skills is treated as a broad construct, but it has several dimensions, and the paper is not clear whether this is a higher-order construct or only a simple latent variable. Also, the text says five indicators for digital skills, but the table includes six dimensions. This should be corrected because construct specification is very important in PLS-SEM.

The discriminant validity assessment is not enough. The paper only uses Fornell-Larcker, but some constructs, especially professional development support and professional characteristics development support, have high correlations. The authors should also report HTMT values to show that the constructs are really distinct from each other.

The methodology lacks important details about the respondents and sampling. The paper states that 308 students participated, but it does not clearly explain the sampling technique, total population, response rate, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and basic demographic profile. Without these details, it is difficult to judge the representativeness of the sample and the possible bias in the findings.

The study measures perceived academic performance, not actual academic performance. This distinction must be emphasized throughout the paper. Some parts of the discussion and conclusion sound like the study measured real academic achievement, but the data are based on students' self-perception. The claims should be toned down, or actual academic indicators such as GPA may be added if available.

The discussion needs deeper interpretation and not only confirmation from previous studies. The current discussion mostly repeats that digital skills and college environment are important. It would be stronger if the authors explain why the college environment may strengthen the effect of digital skills, what specific institutional supports matter most, and how this applies to business and accountancy students in the local context.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The topic about how digital skills influence the academic performance of students is very timely and important today. You did a good job collecting a solid sample of 308 students from the College of Business and Accountancy and applying PLS-SEM for your data analysis. This statistical approach is indeed very appropriate for testing mediation models. Overall, the paper has a good foundation. The theoretical framework is clear, and the findings are positive.



Specific Comments and Recommendations

Abstract and Introduction

The abstract repeats the phrase digital skills and college environment too many times. You can make this shorter and punchier. Also, please add your exact sampling technique here. You mentioned quantitative research design, but how did you choose the students? In the introduction, you explain that technology is an integral part of students' education. This is true, but what is the specific gap in the literature? Why is this study needed right now specifically for Dominican College of Tarlac? You must highlight what we do not know yet before this study. Some sentences are very heavy. For example, you wrote that the student's self-evaluated measure of their scholastic performance which is perceived academic performance is influenced by motivation, self-regulation and goal setting. This can be broken into two sentences for better reading.

Literature Review

Your breakdown of Digital Skills into dimensions like Digital Empathy and Use of Digital Means is very nice. But for the mediating variable, College Environment, the explanation is a bit short. You mentioned Profession Development Support and Profession Characteristics Development Support. You need to explain more deeply how exactly this environment acts as a bridge between a student having digital skills and getting good grades. Your hypotheses are stated clearly. But make sure the paragraph right before each hypothesis gives a very strong logical argument for why you expect this relationship to be significant.

Methodology

You calculated the minimum sample sizes perfectly using inverse square root and gamma-exponential methods. Getting 308 respondents from the BSA and BSBA programs is very good. However, you totally forgot to mention your sampling method. Is it simple random sampling, stratified, or convenience sampling? This is very important for the reader to know. You mentioned data was collected via google forms after getting approval from the Dean. Please specify the timeline. When was this data collected? Which month and year?

Results and Data Analysis

I noticed your Cronbach's Alpha for Creation of Digital Content is 0.58, which is below the standard 0.70. You defended this by pointing to the Composite Reliability of 0.82 and AVE of 0.70. As a reviewer, I accept this justification because PLS-SEM relies more on Composite Reliability. However, you should add one sentence acknowledging this low alpha as a minor limitation. In Figure 2, you show the R^2 values are 0.45 for College Environment and 0.56 for Perceived Academic Performance. But you do not discuss these values anywhere in the text! You only discussed the path coefficients and p-values. You must explain the coefficient of determination to show how much variance your model actually explains.

Discussion and Conclusion

Your discussion section just repeats the findings that digital skills have an effect on academic performance and it is mediated by the environment. You need critical thinking here. Compare your findings with other specific studies. Did anyone find different results? Why is your context unique? In the conclusion, you suggest prioritizing digital literacy enhancement programs. This is a good start. But try to give more concrete examples. What kind of infrastructure or specific programs should the college administrators implement based on your specific findings?



Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

SECOND ROUND

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Reviewer 1</u>	<u>Reviewer 2</u>
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			