



Impact of the use of social networking sites on job performance: effect of digital competence

Impacto del uso de las redes sociales en el rendimiento laboral: efecto de la competencia digital

Luz María Moyano-Castolo 

Universidad Anáhuac México, Facultad de Turismo, México, luzmaria.moyano@anahuac.mx

Karla Barajas-Portas 

Universidad Anáhuac México, Facultad de Economía y Negocios, Marketing, México, karla.barajas@anahuac.mx

Jorge Alberto Hidalgo-Toledo 

Universidad Anáhuac México, Facultad de Comunicación, México, jhidalgo@anahuac.mx

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Abstract

This research examines the role that digital competence and the use of social networking sites (SNS) play in the workplace, focusing on female executives in the tourism sector. It analyzes the intersection between digital culture, technological innovation and its application in professional and everyday contexts. Despite the predominance of women in the sector, persistent gender gaps are observed in the workplace. It is argued that the domain of digital skills can act as a catalyst to mitigate these inequalities. The article offers an enriched definition of digital competence and examines its impact on job performance while addressing the risks and guidelines associated with the use of socio-digital networks. An analytical model is proposed to assess the job performance of female executives in tourism, focusing on digital technology and knowledge transfer. The results indicate a positive correlation between the versatile use of socio-digital networks and job performance. The importance of digital competence in the contemporary era is highlighted, and its implications for organizational culture, job satisfaction, academic performance and employee retention are discussed.

Keywords: Social networking sites, job performance, digital competencies, social networks, digital skills.

Resumen

La presente investigación realiza un examen exhaustivo del papel que las competencias digitales y el uso de redes sociodigitales desempeñan en el ámbito laboral, focalizando en las mujeres ejecutivas en el sector turístico. Se analiza la intersección entre la cultura digital, la innovación tecnológica y su aplicación en contextos profesionales y cotidianos. A pesar de la predominancia femenina en el sector, se observan persistentes brechas de género en el ámbito laboral. Se argumenta que el dominio de habilidades digitales puede actuar como un catalizador para mitigar estas desigualdades. El artículo ofrece una definición enriquecida de competencia digital y examina su impacto en el rendimiento laboral. Se propone un modelo analítico para evaluar el rendimiento laboral de mujeres ejecutivas en el turismo, enfocándose en la tecnología digital. Los resultados indican una correlación positiva entre el uso versátil de redes sociodigitales y el desempeño laboral. Se subraya la importancia de la competencia digital en la era contemporánea y se discuten sus implicaciones en la cultura organizacional, la satisfacción en el trabajo, el desempeño académico y la retención de empleados.

Palabras clave: Redes sociodigitales, desempeño laboral, competencias digitales, redes sociales, habilidades digitales.

1. Introduction

Organizations' convergence and digital transformation are fueling a wave of innovation that is reshaping industries, economies, and societies worldwide; therefore, the challenges posed by the increased use of technology and automation will affect all jobs and sectors (European Commission, 2019). By adopting a multidimensional approach that balances technological innovation with human-centric values and societal goals, organizations and societies can navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the hypermediatization of life and culture, fostering inclusive, sustainable, and equitable outcomes (Colpron, 2022; Debasa, 2022). Digital transformation has changed the service industry and empowered consumers (Chin, 2023; Fitz-Oliveira et al., 2023). The global advancement of technology is rapid, and today, social networking sites surround the preferences of Internet users and have a great influence and penetration in various aspects of daily life. This allows users to communicate and generate content without requiring physical presence, facilitating online learning and information sharing (Kyungsuk et al., 2017; Pontes & Ramos, 2023).

The tourism industry has indeed experienced a significant evolution driven by technological advancements (Fazzolari & Petrocchi, 2018; Neidhardt & Werthner, 2018). Technology has empowered tourism organizations to adapt to the dynamic and competitive landscape of the industry by leveraging digital tools and platforms to better serve global markets, enhance customer experiences, and foster collaboration among stakeholders. Still, they needed to be geared toward the improvement of the quality of tourism practices (Pencarelli, 2020). International tourism has grown faster in the last five years than global trade in goods (World Tourism Organization -UNWTO-, 2019), as revealed by several studies (Ahmad et al., 2020), and this has a particular impact on the way of doing business. Digital marketing and e-commerce are key factors in companies' competitiveness (Carvalho, 2020; Cunha & Urdan, 2023). According to Abou-Shouk (2013), the tourism industry has become the largest category of products and services sold through the Internet; tourism service providers must be equipped with digital capabilities to offer better tourism products and create



enjoyable tourism experiences (Tankovic, 2023). For this reason, achieving proper integration of technology is a must in today's digital age, and women's participation in this process as decision-makers is not only important but essential (Acilar, 2023).

As the tourism sector can be seen as an industry where results provide opportunities for women's professional and personal development (The World Bank Group, 2017), it also presents a complex landscape where gender equality is both a significant opportunity and a pressing challenge (Azzurra, 2020). Addressing the digital gender gap requires comprehensive strategies addressing structural barriers and socio-cultural norms (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020). Gender is indeed inextricably linked to tourism and positively affects gender equality (Zhang, 2020). Women's active participation as consumers and producers of tourism products highlights the integral gender role in shaping the tourism experience (Aynalem et al., 2016). Women represent 54% of the total employment generated in the sector, according to the Global Report on Women in Tourism issued by the World Tourism Organization (World Tourism Organization, 2019). Women worldwide have managed to occupy positions of outstanding leadership and have become change-makers. However, the gender gap in power and leadership is an important component of the persistent lag in gender equality; the "Women in politics map 2023", presents new data for women in executive positions and national parliaments as of January 1st, 2023. Mexico reports 42.1 % of Women Cabinet Ministers. The ministries with the highest participation of women in senior management positions are Labor (44%), Culture (43%) and Agriculture (43%), in contrast to Tourism, where women occupy only 4% of these positions; there is only one woman who holds a general management position out of the total of 24 positions that are considered senior management within the Ministry of Tourism. The income gap in the Ministry of Tourism reaches 38%, which positions it as the ministry with the largest income gap. This, again, is explained by the low participation of women in senior management positions (4%) (IMCO, 2023).

The gender gap for online users has widened from 11% in 2013 to 17% in 2019, and in the world's least-developed countries, it reached 43%. As of 2022, the share of the male population in the world that used the Internet was nearly 70%, compared to 63% of the female population. In 2019, the online usage rate for women was 63%, while the internet penetration among male users was 62% (Statista, 2022). According to a May 2023 survey, "Distribution of internet users in Mexico", 51% of Internet users in Mexico were men, while women comprised 49% of the online population (Statista, 2023). Gender quotas have been shown to be an effective policy solution for increasing women's representation in both business and politics; however, other policy measures such as flexible work arrangements, mentorship programs, leadership training and access to affordable, quality childcare are also crucial in promoting gender equality and empowering women (United Nations, 2023). The gender digital divide is emerging as a prominent aspect of gender inequality, hindering millions of women from accessing education, job opportunities, and essential services. These disparities stem from deep-seated stereotypes that limit women's participation and leadership in innovation processes (United Nations, 2022).

Thommandru (2023) remarks the relevance of tourism and hospitality to economic growth as an industry that provides a large proportion of the population with direct and indirect job opportunities. The underrepresentation of women in top positions within firms, particularly in male-dominated sectors like technology and ICTs, is a multifaceted issue influenced by various aspects: personal, social, interactional, and institutional factors. Women's participation in many fields, including tourism in leadership roles within organizations, is shaped by their individual choices and the broader context of the micro and macro environments, organizational culture, and technology (Figueroa-Domecq et al., 2020). Overall, women's diverse skill sets and qualities make them well-suited for thriving in various roles within the tourism and hospitality industry (Erdogan, 2020). In this regard, digital knowledge management refers to collecting, organizing, and sharing knowledge within an organization using digital tools and technologies and facilitating learning, decision-making, and innovation (Martínez-Navalón et al., 2023). An important point to consider about the role of employees in business success is the significance of the social employee sustainability approach that can lead to numerous benefits, including improved employee satisfaction, enhanced organizational performance, and a positive impact on society as a whole (Cachón-Rodríguez et al., 2022), but also it is important to consider climate and job satisfaction to understand how employees experience their organizations (Santana, 2023).

In the labor context, women executives face a variety of disadvantages that minimize their job performance, such as reduced income compared to men, decreased opportunities for high executive positions within the government sector, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace, to name a few; there is indeed some gender disadvantage (UNWTO, 2021), and also are concentrated in jobs often associated with an extension of work household chores (Araújo-Vila et al., 2021). Investing resources in hiring and retaining women managers can be a strategic approach for organizations to increase the number of female employees and achieve a more balanced gender representation at all levels (Ali, 2022). Job performance refers to the level of performance achieved by effectively accomplishing the goals and objectives of assigned activities. Bouzas & Reyes (2019) state that creative and innovative employees play a crucial role in driving organizational success. There is a need to improve job performance and technological innovation to optimize capabilities, skills, qualities, abilities and/or aptitudes to differentiate individuals with low and high job performance. It is necessary to consider that individuals define their socio-emotional, work motivation, and status growth according to their potential within the organization (Indacochea et al., 2018). According to the International Labour Organization



report (2019), promoting the acquisition of skills, competencies and qualifications of all workers throughout their working life, as to respond to the needs of the labor market is crucial. Still, it is important to consider that both men and women may consider similar factors when evaluating the legitimacy of an organization. These differences in mindset, socialization, experiences, and priorities can lead to variations in perception and all employees should feel valued and empowered to contribute to their fullest potential (Díez-Martín et al., 2022).

Social Networking sites (SNS) is an online platform where people with common interests can exchange thoughts, comments, and opinions. SNS contribute to maintaining social ties; in addition, they have become communication tools that create connections and opportunities for user participation (Shawky, 2020) and also have created new information environments that significantly impact how information is disseminated, consumed, and interacted with, as well as providing users with a highly customizable and personalized experience, offering an unparalleled range of sources and content tailored to their preferences (Kümpel, 2022). Boyd (2007) mentions that SNS allows users to generate a public or semi-public profile in a specific space, relate to other users to make connections and links and visualize the members of their network and their relationships with others.

Navigating and finding relevant information on social media requires a distinct set of skills compared to traditional media (Heiss et al., 2023). The major advantage of SNS is the exchange of information and communication, and some disadvantages or threats that are identified are lack of security, internet addiction, information overload, and loss of social contacts (Drahošová, 2017). Social media practitioners are encouraged to adopt a more tailored and strategic approach to content creation and distribution, considering the unique characteristics of each platform and audience segment to maximize engagement and effectiveness (Pelletier, 2020).

While social media platforms offer numerous benefits, including connectivity, communication, and information sharing, it's essential to recognize and mitigate the potential disadvantages, such as social media fatigue, information overload, privacy concerns, negative mental health impacts, and the spread of misinformation (Heiss, 2023; Polanco-Diges et al., 2022). Research indicates that passive use of social media, characterized by activities such as reading comments, viewing profiles, and scrolling through newsfeeds without active engagement, can negatively affect well-being, satisfaction with life and mental health (Ozimek, 2024). Also, these SNSs have undergone radical changes, and organizations are integrating them into their business processes. The use of social networks may vary depending on the workplace, but the purpose is to create and share experiences, and the use of social networks is inevitable in a work environment (Curay-Túqueres et al., 2023).

For the present study context, we will refer to women executives as salaried workers with higher education whose exercise considerations are of a professional order and competence and are not strictly delimited by them but by the demand of the owners and shareholders of the companies where they provide their professional services. This means that the final decisions regarding the management and development of the company are made based on the decisions of the board of directors and shareholders (Serna, 1999).

The study's main objective is to analyze the impact of the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on job performance, considering the mediating effect of digital competencies. It is important to note that there is little research on the subject oriented to the labor market, which is why the present study is particularly relevant, thus contributing to expanding this knowledge. Next, the theoretical framework on the constructs considered in the theoretical model will be developed. We will begin with job performance, define it, and then link it to the use of social networks at work and digital competence. Subsequently, we will explain the methodology we will follow, including the definition of measurement scales, to present the results of the structural model and finally present conclusions, discussion and future lines of research.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1 Job Performance

People develop specialized activities that contribute to the economic growth of companies in various management fields. A knowledge base consists of the exchange of information between individuals to accomplish a specific task (Stachová et al., 2020) and the integration of digital technologies leads to greater engagement and improves the decision-making process, which results in better job performance for individuals and competitive advantage for organizations (Lepore, 2021). Job performance is a method of improving performance used to evaluate an individual's contribution through formal actions that enable the individual to complete assigned tasks and generate and adopt new ideas. It is a complex structure that refers to the tasks of individuals within an organization towards the organization's overall goals in addition to job satisfaction (Soomro, 2019).

Performance serves as a crucial tool for management in making various decisions related to employee development, promotions, compensation, and training; however, it's imperative that these decisions are made without any form of unlawful discrimination based on employee attributes such as age, race, or gender (Millmore, 2007). By critically examining the criteria and processes used for evaluating employees for advancement opportunities and addressing the biases that may exist within them, organizations can



take meaningful steps toward promoting gender equity and creating inclusive environments where all employees have equal opportunities to thrive and advance in their careers (Roth, 2012). Research on gender differences in ingratiation behavior and its relationship to employee performance sheds light on how men and women may employ different strategies to enhance their relationships and influence within the workplace and how these strategies may impact their performance (Asadullah et al., 2021). While women may indeed be well-equipped to perform and oversee various roles in the tourism and hospitality industry, they still face significant challenges and disadvantages in many workplaces within this sector (Erdogan, 2020).

Job performance is defined as a set of employee behaviors with some expected value for organizations (positive or negative) (Oleksandr, 2005). Job performance from the view of authors Milkovich & Boudrem (1994) includes capabilities, skills, needs and qualities that interact with the nature of work and the organization to produce behaviors that can affect outcomes and unprecedented changes that are occurring in the performance achieved by the organizational worker. Kwahk & Park (2016) explore the impact of the use of social networks on job performance and the benefits of adopting the technology. Babu & Subramoniam (2020) show the impact of SNS on job performance and value creation at work. Because SNSs are used within organizations for both professional and social purposes, it is important to understand their impact on job performance and employee retention (Chauhan, 2023). Duan (2023) points out the impact of digital work on an organization's job performance regarding technology availability. SNS and digital platforms have their own characteristics and capabilities to create, distribute and share knowledge (Yang, 2021), and organizations are increasingly using digital platforms to support better knowledge sharing among employees, with the use of digital technology facilitating knowledge sharing and decision-making through better coordination and communication, leading to improved performance (Hepu Deng, 2023). Using websites and SNS optimizes job performance by contacting and participating in the tourism market (Panas, 2020).

Evaluating job performance is essential for any organization to know the results of the work of each of its employees. Chiavenato (2009) argues that job performance evaluation is applied to each person according to his or her activities, position, skills, and effectiveness for the position he or she holds. Evaluations serve to incentivize and qualify the experience, value, and character of individuals. The usefulness of appraisals in a work environment is an opportunity to identify skill and rate of performance, thus developing strategies for better job performance. SNS are an important resource for organizations. As they are the ones that connect us with other groups, they can greatly influence the behavior of the company. Through the Internet, organizations acquire information and knowledge, which are essential resources for competitiveness and survival in today's knowledge society (Garcia, 2017). Topaloglu (2016) points out that the positive effects of using SNS contribute to personal growth in terms of increased activity, creativity, collaboration, learning experiences, and interactions between people, and also indicates that the positive effects of the use of SNS contribute to personal growth in activity, creativity and cooperation, learning experiences and greater interaction between people. Gonzalez (2017) warns about the potential dangers of inappropriate use of social networks, identifies characteristics and conditions for developing good practices, and relates to generality, concerns and/or fears regarding the use of SNS Measure. Prihananto (2022) analyzes the impact of SNS usage by millennial employees in business organizations (social networks are a highly complex and changing phenomenon) and how digital technologies can improve knowledge sharing and decision-making through better coordination and communication. It points out that it is possible to observe whether this is facilitated or what impact this has on organizational performance (Deng, 2023).

Undoubtedly, tourism is a sector that requires setting goals and implementing strategies that allow a favorable positioning. Rebollo-Catalán (2017) points out the digital competencies of women in the use of SNS and determines profiles according to their level of skill in the networks and the differences in digital competence according to their work situation. Personality dimensions play a significant role in shaping the performance of hospitality professionals. The tourism industry is inherently people-oriented, requiring employees to interact with guests and colleagues and effective management, so personality dimensions are connected and relevant to the performance of hospitality professionals (Jangao et al., 2024).

The model proposed in this study takes variables from the Rebollo-Catalán research, with the aim of evaluating the job performance of women executives, and the main contribution lies in exploring the role of digital technologies in improving knowledge sharing and decision-making for better job performance in a digitized work environment

2.2 Versatility of use

Another important criterion is the versatility of use; this means that SNS can be used for different purposes, in different environments and working areas; therefore, versatility positively affects its usability. The literature suggests that SNS can be used for many different purposes (Fulk & Yuan, 2013), such as creating and accessing to information archives (Leon et al., 2017) and connecting experts (Han et al., 2015). The versatility of SNS is combined with the relationship between work activities and access to information assets that contribute to collaboration (Leon et al., 2017). Research also indicates that while social networking sites (SNS) can facilitate connections and communication, their impact on social connectedness and happiness can vary depending on various factors, including individual differences and usage patterns (Reyes, 2022).



By critically examining the criteria and processes used for evaluating employees for advancement opportunities and addressing the biases that may exist within them, organizations can take meaningful steps toward promoting gender equity and creating inclusive environments where all employees have equal opportunities to thrive and advance in their careers (Oyesomi et al., 2014); women's emotions and behaviors play a crucial role in shaping the emotional landscape of social media platforms, driving engagement, connection, and influence (Li, 2023).

The motivation to use social networking sites helps to understand digital behaviors. Gremmen (2019) points out that these are virtual tools used primarily for peer interactions and leisure activities, we argue for identifying user profiles and problems that can arise from the use of social digital networks. Versatility is the most important variable to explain the motives for using social networks (González et al., 2017). It is possible to identify people who influence the knowledge-sharing process on internal social media and identify employees who may cause loss of internal knowledge (Leon et al., 2017). Implementing dialogic internet principles and social presence strategies in the Facebook posts of top social CEOs can enhance public engagement outcomes (Men, 2018). Embracing environmental sustainability presents significant opportunities for tourism companies to strengthen their competitiveness, reputation, and long-term viability. By integrating sustainability into their business strategies, operations, and marketing efforts, tourism companies can not only attract environmentally-conscious travelers but also contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural resources, foster sustainable development, and create shared value for stakeholders (Martínez-Navalón et al., 2020).

Employees should use SNS in a self-organized, self-determined way, according to their requirements, work experiences and responsibilities, and positively influence the use, directly increasing work efficiency and becoming a "versatile team" (Riemer & Johnston, 2017). For Meske, Wilms and Stieglitz (2019) there is a significant positive correlation between the versatility of SNS use and perceived usefulness. González, Muñoz & Álvarez (2017) point out that versatility in the use of SNS is the most important variable and has the greatest influence on the motivation to use these technological tools. In the tourism field, more and more attention is paid to SNS daily (Sakshi et al., 2020). Due to its versatility, it is used as a tool for travel planning and decision-making, tourism promotion, and consumer interaction (Abou-Shouk & Hewedi, 2016).

H1: The versatility in the use of SNS has a direct and positive impact on the job performance of female executives in the tourism sector.

2.3 Worries

Internet use has become an essential part of people's lives, and an increasing misuse of the Internet can threaten the mental and emotional health of generations, with young people being the most affected (Duroy et al., 2014). Lee & Gun-Woong (2018) point out that information technologies work as a double-edged sword despite the many opportunities they offer (Baccarella et al., 2018) and that the extent of their usefulness/benefits depend on their correct use, as their incorrect use can reduce the employee's work performance (Lu, 2015) and generate privacy concerns (Giermindl, 2017). Employees should use social networks in a self-organized and self-determined manner according to their requirements, work experience and responsibilities, which should have a positive impact on the use of social networks, as it directly increases work efficiency (Riemer & Johnston, 2017) and their contribution to school learning (González, 2017).

One aspect to consider is the technological innovation in SNS that drives business development. Although cyber risk exists, it rarely becomes an obstacle to the adoption and use of new technologies. Another related aspect refers to the development of a culture and training for employee safety and resilience (Marsh & McLennan, 2019); they also have positive and negative social consequences for families (Dehghani, 2021); women use social networks more compulsively due to anxiety, fear of social interaction, and negative evaluation (Fayaz et al., 2021). The portrayal of women being more emotional than men in media coverage perpetuates harmful stereotypes and biases that can impact women's perceptions, opportunities, and advancement in various spheres, including leadership positions (Silva, 2019). Research findings often highlight the significance of emotional expression as a primary motivation for users to sustain their engagement with social media platforms (Li, 2023).

For the above reasons, it was considered important to assess women managers' perceptions of concerns or fears in the tourism industry.

H2: Concern of worries in using social networks has an inverse impact on job performance of women executives in the tourism industry.

2.4 SNS usage

The term network on the Internet refers to the network-like representation of topics in the digital space. In this non-physical space, a convergence process takes place between the social and the communicative (Garcia & Olmedo, 2019), and users can create personal information online, generate online contact lists, and frequently review and interact with feeds (Verduyn et al., 2020).



SNS influences and permeates many aspects of everyday life. They have fundamentally changed the way people interact, and the workforce is no exception. On the other hand, they can increase employee productivity by facilitating connection with colleagues and resources worldwide, or their use during work for non-work-related reasons is becoming more common and can negatively impact work. The widespread use of SNS in organizations is considered an important driver of employee job performance. If organizations do not recognize the consequences of such use, it can affect job performance (Brooks & Califf, 2017). We often hear that employees' social media posts and profiles are an important factor in hiring and firing and that employees are judged based on whether or not they communicate without privacy (Robards, 2022).

The use of the Internet has become an indispensable ingredient in human life and presents potential risks, and the sharing of tourism experiences on social networks represents a research topic. SNS are used for a variety of purposes, including searching for travel information, sightseeing, weather, reviews, hotel reservations, restaurants/bars, car rentals, to name a few. Therefore, socio-digital networks are becoming one of the most reliable sources of information in the tourism industry (Shawky, 2020). Travelers sharing their experiences through social digital networks improves their post-travel experience, either positively or negatively, and has become a popular tool (Leung et al., 2013); another trend is the approach to communication and advertising of tourism services on mobile SNS (Jun-Jie et al., 2018). There are gender differences in the motivations behind social media use. While individual preferences may vary, some studies have identified overarching trends in how men and women use social media platforms (Krasnova et al., 2017). These trends represent overarching patterns, individual preferences and behaviors on social media can vary widely based on factors such as age, cultural background, personality traits, and social context. It's essential to recognize the diversity of motivations and behaviors among social media users and to avoid generalizations based solely on gender; the analysis of the results also suggests that both women and men predominantly use social media for activity planning and travel arrangements before engaging in activities. Additionally, the influence of photos and videos on decision-making appears to be more pronounced for women compared to men (Karatsoli, 2020). Khera studies the interaction between gender and fintech and examines gender gaps in leadership in the fintech industry (2022). Empirical analysis investigates the dynamics of public engagement with corporate CEOs on social media platforms, as well as the underlying motivations driving such engagement and its significance (Men, 2016).

But even more relevant is the importance of women executives in this sector to evaluate the interactivity, self-management and adoption of these networks for a better performance of their work, which leads us to the following hypotheses:

H3: The usage of SNS at work has a direct and positive impact on the job performance of women executives in the tourism sector.

2.5 Digital Competence

The digital transformation being experienced around the world has a direct impact on the development of society (Krajčik, 2023). Vocational training to acquire and integrate knowledge, skills, and digital competencies is therefore essential for all productively active individuals, and learning digital competencies is a means of achieving personal and satisfying outcomes. Particular emphasis is placed on Siddoo et al. (2019), and this training becomes a great challenge since, in addition, the development of critical thinking, effective communication, problem-solving, and decision-making through the management and use of technology must be considered. Abilities, skills, and competencies are complementary terms, but their meanings differ according to the context. According to Ochoa et al. (2017), competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable professionals to achieve high performance and meet the challenges of the labor market from a personal, cognitive, social, technical, global, and sustainable perspective.

According to Ochoa (2023), the competencies that workers must develop to achieve organizational objectives are determined by digital technologies. Song et al. (2019) mention that digital competence can create and transfer knowledge, generate spaces to interact and collaborate between members and generate a sense of belonging (Song et al., 2019). It has been observed that when a person solves problems and thinks and learns digital skills, they have a more significant impact on adaptation and development in a technical context than someone who only deals with operations management (Van Laar et al., 2017). Furthermore, at the same time, it puts into practice the necessary knowledge depending on the situation (Ahmedshina, 2021). Despite the daily interaction with mobile devices, platforms, and socio-digital networks, there are still challenges related to digital skills, such as attention, communication, and the ability to learn to function (Porat, 2018). Digital knowledge is considered the backbone of the development of the digital economy, as professionals are equipped with various skills, such as information management and digital communication, necessary to complete specific tasks (Ferrari et al., 2012).

Tourism not only has a significant economic impact but can also positively impact a country's culture, infrastructure, employment and international promotion. It provides an important source of revenue to the country through tourists' spending on accommodation, food, transportation, entertainment, shopping, and other related activities, and it can boost local and national economies. In this scenario, the tourism sector, like many other sectors, is becoming increasingly digital, and digital development and communication play a key role. It also addresses the growing demand for high-quality services and a more qualified workforce (Vasconcelos, 2019).



In today's world, the challenges faced by women to have greater professional growth by adopting a more proactive role are readily invoked, where the application of digital competencies is a reality and goes beyond the technical connotation; as they integrate digital knowledge, skills and abilities in the mastery of technologies and favor continuous learning (Pettersson, 2018). Like their male counterparts, female tourism executives must also possess digital competencies to lead effectively in this industry. These digital competencies are critical to address the challenges and seize the opportunities that digital transformation has brought to the industry. In particular, the tourism sector is characterized by an intensive use of information and communication technologies, mainly due to the characteristic nature of the services provided and the characteristics of consumers with a high level of technological literacy and a desire to seek out and obtain the best options.

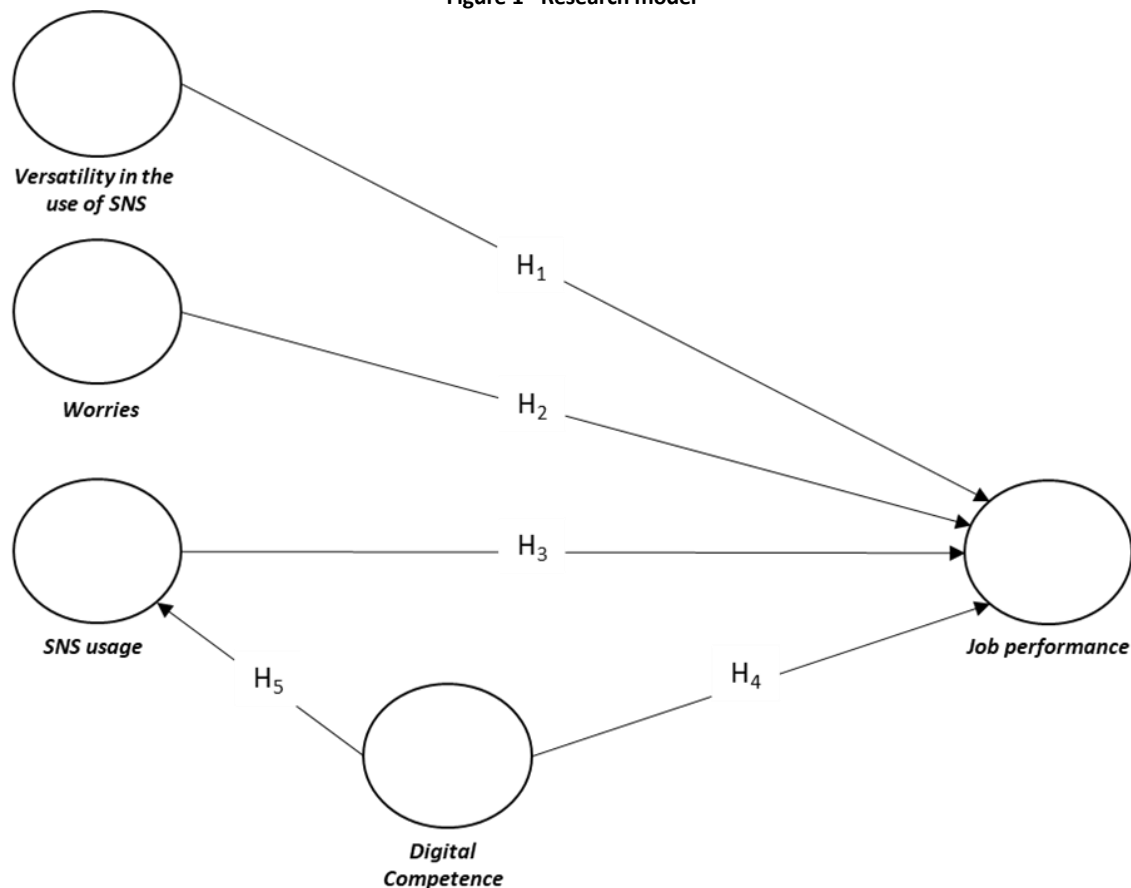
Therefore, it is important to train the tourism workforce to become decision-makers and industry strategists (Tvenge & Martinsen, 2018). Since female managers are thought to come into contact with digital technology daily, the relationship between the use of technology and the acquisition of digital skills is considered beneficial (Rajahonka & Villman, 2019). Given the rapid integration of technology into today's environment, it has become essential to acquire the digital literacy necessary for employment and participation in society (Arango, 2019).

H4 Digital competence has a direct and positive impact on the job performance of female executives in the tourism sector.

H5 Digital competence has a direct and positive impact on the SNS usage at work of women executives.

The research model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Research model



Source: own elaboration

3. Methodology

A digital survey was employed as a technique for data collection. A convenience sampling was conducted based on a database of female executives in the tourism sector, comprised of a little more than 500 women who hold middle to senior management positions, including owners of companies in the tourism sector in Mexico. All the database members were invited to participate via



e-mail and later reminders via WhatsApp. The questionnaire was responded to by female executives in the tourism sector in Mexico to understand what factors have influenced their work performance through SNS. According to the criteria established by Hair et al. (2017), the sample is considered sufficient for analysis by PLS-SEM for effects superior than 0.25. Values for f^2 where greater than 0.25.

Data were collected during April and May of 2023. The final sample comprised 116 female executives in the tourism sector between ages 25 and 67 (average age 44). 32.4% were single, 51.6% married, 11.4% divorced, and the rest declared another marital status. Regarding educational level, 63.2% have a bachelor's degree, and 36.8% have postgraduate studies. 23.1% have 1 child, 35.5% have 2 children, 7.3% have 3 or more children, and 34.1% have no children. We found that all the respondents use at least two SNSs.

The questionnaire collected perceptual data about digital competence and usage of SNS. Perceptions were measured on a seven-point Likert-like scale, with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. It consists of 45 variables, distributed as follows: 8 classification variables and 37 variables comprising the theoretical model. For the measurement of each of the dimensions of the model, previously defined scales were used. The scales used for each construct are detailed as follows. For the constructs, versatility in the use of SNS, worries, and SNS usage, we apply the scales defined by González Sanmamed et al. (2017); for digital competence and its components the scale of Arango-Morales et al. (2019) was used; this study was developed in the field of education, so the adaptation was made for the work environment. And, finally, for the construct job performance we used a combination of the scale of Deng et al. (2023) and Moyano-Castolo et al. (2022).

Digital competence is measured as a second-order construct formed by Network Leadership, Networked Collaborative Learning, Information Management, Collective Digital Communication, Individual Digital Communication, and Digital Knowledge. Network Leadership is the ability to influence the SNS; Networked Collaborative Learning is the capability to collaborate with others in the communication process in a digital era; Information Management is the ability to obtain, evaluate, search for, share, and organize information in SNS; Collective Digital Communication is the interpersonal ability to collaborate efficiently and effectively in SNS; Individual Digital Communication is the interpersonal ability to communicate in SNS; and Digital Knowledge refers to the digital competence that a user has in virtual environments (Arango-Morales et al., 2019).

The conceptual model was tested using partial least squares approach structural equations (PLS-SEM). The software used was SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 Ringle et al. (2022), through the PLS algorithm to determine the measurement structure and, second, the estimation of the structural model. According to Chin (1998), using PLS-SEM when analyzing complex models that seek to analyze predictivity is appropriate. The study carries out two stages to estimate the measurement and model structure. Subsequently, bootstrapping and blindfolding methods are used with 5,000 subsamples, according to the recommendation of Hair et al. (2017), to estimate the significance and predictability of the model.

4. Results

Chin (1998) recommends evaluating the measurement structure (constructs) considering reliability, convergent validity, and validity. The factor loadings present values higher than 0.6 and statistical significance. Table 1 shows the information from the measurement report for both items and constructs. The mean variances extracted were greater than 0.5 for all constructs. These tests indicate the high reliability of the indicators. Cronbach's alphas and composite reliabilities for all constructs exceeded 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Additionally, discriminant validity analysis corresponding to the Fornell-Larcker criterion in conjunction with the HTMT criterion was carried out, where we observed that the constructs have the highest loadings within themselves and are greater than those corresponding to the other constructs (Table 2). Our results of digital competence measurement as a second-order construct achieve the necessary explanatory power (Arango-Morales et al., 2019).



Table 1 - Reliability and validity test

Construct/latent variable	Item	Outer loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	
Versatility in the SNS use	VE1	0.827	0.870	0.902	0.649	
	VE2	0.785				
	VE3	0.859				
	VE4	0.821				
	VE5	0.729				
Worries	W1	0.906	0.778	0.860	0.675	
	W2	0.712				
	W3	0.835				
SNS usage	USG1	0.927	0.952	0.963	0.840	
	USG2	0.956				
	USG3	0.926				
	USG4	0.912				
	USG5	0.858				
DIGITAL COMPETENCE	<i>Network leadership</i>	NL1	0.824	0.920	0.940	0.758
		NL2	0.911			
		NL3	0.853			
		NL4	0.855			
		NL5	0.907			
	<i>Networked collaborative learning</i>	NCL1	0.910	0.944	0.957	0.818
		NCL2	0.923			
		NCL3	0.915			
		NCL4	0.907			
		NCL5	0.866			
	<i>Information management</i>	IM1	0.800	0.773	0.869	0.688
		IM2	0.865			
		IM3	0.823			
	<i>Collective digital communication</i>	CDC1	0.722	0.748	0.856	0.666
		CDC2	0.864			
		CDC3	0.855			
	<i>Individual digital communication</i>	IDC1	0.860	0.682	0.863	0.759
		IDC2	0.882			
	<i>Digital knowledge</i>	DK1	0.915	0.942	0.949	0.490
		DK2	0.920			
Job Performance	JP1	0.844	0.755	0.845	0.583	
	JP2	0.878				
	JP3	0.595				
	JP4	0.704				

Source: survey data

Table 2 - Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis and HTMT ratios

	CDC	IDC	DK	JP	NL	IM	W	NCL	USG	VUS
CDC	0.82									
IDC	0.49 (0.51)	0.87								
DK	0.76 (0.77)	0.61 (0.64)	0.83							
JP	0.26 (0.29)	0.36 (0.39)	0.37 (0.41)	0.76						
NL	0.66 (0.68)	0.43 (0.44)	0.67 (0.67)	0.21 (0.22)	0.87					
IM	0.41 (0.45)	0.45 (0.48)	0.60 (0.63)	0.41 (0.46)	0.40 (0.42)	0.83				
W	0.09 (0.11)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.12)	-0.06 (0.13)	-0.07 (0.12)	0.23 (0.22)	0.82			
NCL	0.71 (0.72)	0.41 (0.47)	0.76 (0.81)	0.33 (0.35)	0.67 (0.72)	0.43 (0.46)	0.06 (0.11)	0.90		
USG	0.43 (0.44)	0.44 (0.44)	0.44 (0.45)	0.26 (0.27)	0.37 (0.40)	0.17 (0.20)	0.13 (0.15)	0.36 (0.41)	0.92	
VUS	0.40 (0.41)	0.47 (0.46)	0.41 (0.44)	0.37 (0.39)	0.32 (0.33)	0.30 (0.33)	0.01 (0.09)	0.33 (0.38)	0.55 (0.59)	0.81

Note: HTMT ratios are in parentheses.

Source: survey data



Once the measurement scales of the first and second order constructs that make up our model have been validated, we test the hypotheses in the theoretical model. The results of the structural model (inner model) analyzed are presented in Table 3. The R2 for Job Performance is 0.308 and 0.265 for SNS usage. Therefore, Versatility in using SNS, Worries, SNS usage, and Digital Competence explains the 30.8% Job Performance. Moreover, Digital Competence explains 26.5% of the SNS Usage.

The inner model suggests that the strongest effect of the model is Digital Competence on SNS usage (0.788), followed by SNS usage on Job Performance (0.326), Versatility in the use of SNS on Job Performance (0.258), Digital Competence on Job Performance (0.236); and Worries on Job Performance (-0.073). Using the bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples, all relationships are shown to be significant, except for Worries on Job Performance; details for p-value are provided in Table 3. Thus, Versatility in the use of SNS, worries, SNS usage, and digital competence as a second-order construct are predictors of Job Performance. The test of the predictive relevance was performed with a blindfolding procedure to estimate how well-observed values are shown by the Q2 model we use. Value of Q2 should be greater than zero according to Chin (1998). The model meets this criterion, so we can infer that the model has predictive relevance. Goodness-of-fit tests were performed and obtained a value of SRMR = 0.063 and NFI= 0.916, within the recommended limit (<0.07 and >0.9). Therefore, the models fit correctly.

Table 3 - Structural model evaluation

	Path relation	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	P Value	Effect Size f^2	Result
H ₁	Versatility in the SNS use -> Job Performance	0.258	0.098	0.025	0.157**	Supported
H ₂	Worries -> Job Performance	-0.073	0.068	0.211	0.075*	Not Supported
H ₃	SNS usage -> Job Performance	0.326	0.061	0.000	0.145*	Supported
H ₄	Digital Competence -> Job Performance	0.236	0.028	0.032	0.131*	Supported
H ₅	Digital Competence -> SNS usage	0.788	0.086	0.000	0.254**	Supported
	Endogenous variable	R²		P Value	Q²	
	Job Performance	0.308		0.000	0.253	
	SNS usage	0.265		0.000	0.197	
	<i>Overall fit of the estimated model</i>	<i>Value</i>		<i>H₉₅</i>		
	SRMR	0.063		0.049		
	NFI	0.916				
Notes for Effect size: *0.020 < f^2 < 0.150 (weak) ; ** 0.150 < f^2 < 0.350 (medium); *** f^2 > 0.350 (large)						

Source: survey data

5. Discussion

Navigating the challenges and opportunities posed by the hypermediatization of life and culture and the digital transformation of organizations demands a multidimensional approach. This approach should blend technological innovation with human-centric values and societal objectives (Colpron, 2022). The convergence of digital transformation, demographic changes, and labor market dynamics highlights the interconnected nature of global trends (Chin, 2023). Achieving proper integration of technology is imperative in today's digital age. Women's participation as decision-makers in this process is important and essential, as highlighted by Acilar (2023); as well as the importance of implementable policies to bridge the gender digital divide.

Gender is intricately linked to tourism and can have a positive impact on gender equality in the tourism industry, as noted by Zhang (2020), implementing policies aimed at bridging the gender digital divide. Women's active involvement as consumers and producers of tourism products underscores the significant role of gender in shaping the overall tourism experience, as discussed by Aynalem et al. (2016). Acknowledging environmental sustainability as a valuable asset within the tourism sector provides opportunities for tourism companies to improve their competitiveness, reputation, and long-term sustainability, as outlined by Martínez-Navalón et al. (2020).

Indeed, social media platforms offer various benefits, such as connectivity and information sharing; however, it's crucial to acknowledge and address potential disadvantages like social media fatigue, information overload, privacy issues, negative mental health impacts, and the spread of misinformation, as highlighted by Heiss (2023).



6. Conclusions and implications

The impact of the use of social networking sites on job performance, specifically focusing on the effect of digital competence on women in the tourism industry, is a topic of growing interest in the field of both social media studies and gender studies within the context of the workplace. With the results found in the research, we can conclude that job performance is directly influenced by usage and versatility in the use of SNS and that there is a direct path from Digital Competence to Job Performance, but also indirectly through usage. The relationship between worries and job performance is inverse, not proving our hypothesis and corroborating that female executives in the tourism sector are still concerned about privacy and the use of SNSs.

Digital competence is a determining factor for women executives in the tourism sector to develop effectively in social networks and thus achieve job performance. This is due to the diversity of digital competence factors contributing to practical SNS usage. Digital competence influences both the individual and the collective, both collaborative and personal, being a construct that will define how women executives in the tourism sector will be able to develop. Therefore, developing digital competence will be a task for entrepreneurs, executives, and all companies if they want to improve their employees' job performance.

To conclude, this article offers a significant contribution to understanding the pervasive influence of socio-digital networks and digital competencies in the contemporary work landscape, with a special focus on the tourism industry and, more specifically, the female executives that comprise it. Through rigorous analysis, a strong correlation is established between digital competence and job performance, thus clearing up any ambiguity about the importance of these skills in the digital age.

The research further highlights a notable gap in the academic literature on the topic, persuasively arguing for the need for future inquiries that dive deeper into understanding how to improve digital competencies in modern work environments. This gap is especially relevant in the context of persistent gender disparities in the industry, and the study strongly advocates for the empowerment of women in leadership and decision-making roles.

Not least, the study demonstrates that effective application of digital networks and technologies is possible and beneficial in improving both individual performance and organizational success. Thus, The article significantly expands the academic and professional discourse on digital competence, setting a precedent for future research that seeks to elucidate the complexities at the intersection of gender, job performance, and digitization in the tourism industry.

Finally, the article reaffirms the cardinal importance of digital competences as an indispensable resource for capitalizing on emerging opportunities in the digitized tourism arena, particularly for women in management positions.

Credit author statement

All authors have contributed equally. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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