

Predictive Analysis of Startup Ecosystems: Integration of Technology Acceptance Models with Random Forest Techniques

Daniel Bennet¹, Sheila Aulia Anjani², Ora Pertiwi Daeli³, Dedi Martono⁴, Cicilia Sriliasta Bangun⁵

¹ Dept. Information System, Eduaward Incorporation, United Kingdom ² Dept. Digital Business, University of Raharja, Indonesia ³ Dept. Retail management, University of Raharja, Indonesia ⁴ Dept. Engineers,

University of Raharja, Indonesia ⁵ Dept. Industrial Engineering, Esa Unggul University, Indonesia

¹daniel.bennet@eduaward.co.uk, ²sheila@raharja.info, ³ora.pertiwi@raharja.info ⁴dedi@raharja.info ⁵cicilia.bangun@esaunggul.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamic realm of startup ecosystems, forecasting trends and measuring success pose significant challenges. To tackle this multifaceted issue, a novel research method proposes integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the robust Random Forest algorithm, thereby enhancing predictive accuracy. This innovative approach encompasses various aspects including technical intricacies, financial dynamics, stakeholder interactions, and entrepreneurial challenges. Employing empirical data, such as revenue growth, capital raised, innovation rate, and active users, forms the foundation of this methodology. The model's efficacy is demonstrated through a process involving training on 80% of the dataset and testing on the remaining 20%, showcasing superior predictive capabilities compared to conventional methods. Comparative analysis with established models like logistic regression further highlights the superiority of the integrated TAM and Random Forest approach, particularly in predicting startup success. These findings offer invaluable insights for entrepreneurs navigating the complexities of the startup landscape, as well as for investors, policymakers, and educators. Understanding and supporting growth dynamics within the startup ecosystem can foster innovation and prosperity. Moreover, in the academic sphere, this research contributes a novel framework for startup prediction, enriching existing knowledge and facilitating informed decision-making. Overall, this research not only provides practical applications for immediate stakeholders but also contributes to advancing the theoretical foundations of startup prognostication, thus serving as a significant milestone in the field.

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Corresponding Author:

Sheila Aulia Anjani

Dept. Digital Business, Univeristy of Raharja, Indonesia

Email: sheila@raharja.info

1. INTRODUCTION

In the continuously evolving digital era, the startup ecosystem stands as a crucial catalyst for innovation and economic growth [1, 2]. This dynamic landscape, fraught with uncertainties, presents a formidable challenge in predicting its direction and trends [2]. Traditional analytical methods, while valuable, often fall short in capturing the intricate complexities of the startup ecosystem [3]. Recognizing this gap, our research aims to develop a sophisticated predictive methodology by seamlessly integrating the Technology Acceptance

Model (TAM) [4] with the Random Forest algorithm [5], forming a powerful synergy for enhanced predictive analytics.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), renowned for its effectiveness in understanding user perceptions and behaviors towards technology [6], serves as a robust foundation for comprehending technology adoption and utilization within the startup context. However, TAM has its limitations [7], particularly in its focus on perceptual constructs, potentially overlooking crucial empirical dimensions such as investment dynamics and entrepreneurial challenges [8]. To address these gaps, the integration of TAM with Random Forest, known for its prowess in handling large datasets and resistance to overfitting, provides an innovative and comprehensive analytical approach [9].

Our research not only seeks to enhance prediction accuracy within the startup ecosystem but also endeavors to unravel the intricate interplay between technological perceptions and empirical factors influencing startups. By doing so, we contribute significantly to existing literature, offering a more robust analytical tool for stakeholders in the startup ecosystem. This, in turn, empowers informed decision-making and fosters the development of a more resilient and adaptable ecosystem.

In conclusion, the amalgamation of TAM and Random Forest techniques in predictive analysis offers a holistic framework that not only advances prediction accuracy but also enriches our understanding of the multifaceted dynamics within the startup ecosystem. This research, with its innovative approach, holds the potential to transform the way stakeholders navigate the challenges and opportunities inherent in the ever-evolving landscape of startups.

Furthermore, our research recognizes the need to bridge the gap between theoretical models and practical implications within the startup ecosystem. While theoretical frameworks like TAM provide valuable insights into user perceptions, the real-world dynamics of startups involve a myriad of factors beyond technology acceptance. By incorporating Random Forest techniques, we aim to capture the intricate interdependencies among various empirical dimensions, including market trends, funding dynamics, and regulatory landscapes. This nuanced understanding will not only refine predictive accuracy but also empower stakeholders with actionable insights that extend beyond the realm of mere technology adoption, fostering a holistic approach to navigating the challenges and seizing the opportunities in the startup ecosystem.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a widely used theoretical framework in the field of information systems and technology management aimed at understanding and predicting users' acceptance and adoption of new technologies [10]. Examined the evolution of TAM in the last decade, highlighting how the model has adapted to incorporate factors such as the influence of social media and mobile technology. Developed by Fred Davis in the 1980s and later extended by Fred Davis and Richard Bagozzi, TAM posits that users' behavioral intentions to use a technology are determined by two primary factors: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU)[11]. Tested the application of TAM in the context of technology startups, demonstrating how user perceptions of new technology can influence adoption and the success of startups. Perceived usefulness refers to the user's belief that employing the technology will enhance their performance or productivity, while perceived ease of use relates to the user's perception of the effort required to use the technology. TAM suggests that these perceptions influence users' attitudes toward the technology, which in turn shapes their behavioral intentions and actual usage behavior. TAM has been widely applied in various contexts to assess technology acceptance and adoption, facilitating the development of strategies to enhance user acceptance and mitigate resistance to new technologies.

2.2. Random Forest Algorithm

The Random Forest algorithm is a powerful and popular ensemble learning method used in machine learning for classification and regression tasks[12]. Evaluated the use of Random Forest in big data analysis, emphasizing its effectiveness in handling data variability and complexity. It operates by constructing multiple decision trees during the training phase and outputs the mode (for classification) or average prediction (for regression) of the individual trees[13]. Explored the application of Random Forest in predicting the success of startups, showing how this algorithm can be used to identify relevant patterns and trends. The "random" in Random Forest stems from two sources of randomness: first, the algorithm randomly selects subsets of the training data (bootstrap samples) with replacement, which are used to train each decision tree, and second, at

each node of the decision tree, a random subset of features is considered for splitting. This randomness helps to decorrelate the individual trees, reducing the risk of overfitting and improving the model's generalization performance. Moreover, Random Forest provides estimates of feature importance, enabling insights into which features contribute most significantly to the prediction task. Its robustness, scalability, and ability to handle high-dimensional data make Random Forest a popular choice for various real-world applications, including but not limited to finance, healthcare, and marketing.

2.3. Startup Ecosystem

The startup ecosystem refers to the interconnected network of resources, individuals, organizations, and institutions that support the creation, growth, and success of startups[14]. Investigated the dynamics of the global startup ecosystem, highlighting the role of technology and innovation in startup growth. This ecosystem typically includes various components such as entrepreneurs, investors (angel investors, venture capitalists, etc.), incubators and accelerators, co-working spaces, universities and research institutions, government agencies, legal and financial service providers, and other supporting entities[15]. Explored how environmental factors and networks influence the startup ecosystem, with a specific focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each component plays a crucial role in nurturing and sustaining startups at different stages of their development. Entrepreneurs benefit from access to funding, mentorship, networking opportunities, knowledge sharing, infrastructure, and regulatory support provided by the ecosystem. Investors seek promising startups to invest in, while incubators and accelerators offer structured programs and resources to help startups refine their business models, develop their products or services, and scale their operations. Universities and research institutions contribute to the ecosystem by fostering innovation, conducting research, and facilitating technology transfer. Government agencies often provide funding, incentives, and policies to promote entrepreneurship and innovation. Overall, a vibrant startup ecosystem fosters innovation, drives economic growth, creates jobs, and contributes to societal development.

2.4. Integration of TAM and Predictive Algorithms

The integration of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with predictive algorithms represents a sophisticated approach to understanding and forecasting user acceptance and adoption of new technologies[16]. Examined how integrating TAM with predictive techniques can enhance understanding of user behavior in the e-commerce context. By combining TAM's theoretical framework with predictive algorithms such as machine learning models, researchers and practitioners can leverage both qualitative and quantitative methods to gain deeper insights into users' behaviors and intentions towards technology adoption[17]. Demonstrated how combining TAM with machine learning algorithms can provide deeper insights into the adoption of financial technology.

Firstly, TAM provides a solid foundation for understanding the psychological factors influencing user acceptance, focusing on constructs like perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. These constructs can serve as features or input variables in predictive algorithms. For instance, machine learning models can analyze historical data on users' perceptions and behaviors to predict future adoption rates or identify key factors influencing adoption decisions. Moreover, predictive algorithms can enhance TAM by providing more nuanced and personalized insights into user behavior. By incorporating data from various sources such as user demographics, past interactions, and contextual information, predictive models can identify patterns and trends that may not be captured by traditional TAM surveys alone. This enables a more dynamic and adaptive understanding of user acceptance, allowing for targeted interventions and strategies to improve technology adoption.

Additionally, the integration of TAM with predictive algorithms enables continuous learning and refinement of the acceptance model. As new data becomes available, predictive models can be updated and retrained to reflect changing user preferences, market dynamics, and technological advancements. This iterative process ensures that the acceptance model remains relevant and effective in guiding decision-making for technology developers, marketers, and policymakers. Overall, the integration of TAM with predictive algorithms offers a powerful framework for understanding and predicting technology acceptance, combining the strengths of both qualitative theory and quantitative analysis. By leveraging this integrated approach, organizations can make more informed decisions and develop strategies that drive successful technology adoption and implementation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

Research design refers to the blueprint or plan that outlines the steps and procedures for conducting a research study to address a specific research question or hypothesis. It encompasses various elements such as the research question, objectives, methodology, data collection techniques, sampling strategy, and data analysis procedures. A well-designed research study is essential for ensuring the validity, reliability, and credibility of the research findings. The choice of research design depends on the nature of the research question, the available resources, and the desired outcomes. Common research designs include experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, descriptive, and exploratory designs, each with its own strengths and limitations. Researchers must carefully consider factors such as internal and external validity, bias, and ethical considerations when designing their studies to ensure the rigor and integrity of the research process. Additionally, clear documentation of the research design enables transparency and reproducibility, allowing other researchers to evaluate and build upon the findings. Overall, a well-conceived research design is fundamental to the success of any research endeavor, providing a systematic framework for generating new knowledge and advancing understanding in the field.

3.1.1. Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering information or data from various sources for the purpose of analysis and interpretation. It is a crucial step in the research process and can involve various methods depending on the nature of the research question, the type of data needed, and the resources available. Common methods of data collection include surveys, interviews, observations, experiments, and secondary data sources such as existing databases, literature reviews, and archival records. Each method has its own strengths and limitations, and researchers must carefully select the most appropriate method or combination of methods to ensure the validity, reliability, and relevance of the data collected. During the data collection process, researchers must also consider ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and privacy, and minimizing potential harm or discomfort. Moreover, they should employ strategies to minimize bias and errors, such as using standardized instruments, training data collectors, and ensuring data quality through validation and verification procedures. Once the data is collected, it is typically organized, coded, and entered into a database or data management system for analysis. This analysis may involve various statistical techniques, qualitative methods, or data mining algorithms, depending on the research objectives and the type of data collected. Finally, the findings derived from the data analysis are interpreted and used to draw conclusions, make recommendations, and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the respective field of study. Overall, effective data collection is essential for producing meaningful and reliable research outcomes.

3.2. Data Processing and Analysis

Data processing and analysis involve transforming raw data into meaningful insights through systematic procedures. Initially, collected data undergoes cleaning and organization to remove inconsistencies and ensure accuracy. Following this, various statistical or qualitative analysis techniques are applied, depending on the research objectives and nature of the data. Statistical analysis involves employing descriptive or inferential methods to identify patterns, relationships, or trends within the dataset, while qualitative analysis entails interpreting textual or non-numeric data to extract themes or meanings. Through these processes, researchers uncover valuable insights, validate hypotheses, and draw conclusions that contribute to knowledge advancement in the respective field of study. Effective data processing and analysis are crucial for generating reliable findings and making informed decisions based on evidence.

3.3. Model Implementation

Model implementation refers to the process of putting a developed model or algorithm into practice to solve real-world problems or achieve specific objectives. This typically involves translating the theoretical concepts and algorithms into executable code or systems that can be deployed and used in practical applications. Depending on the nature of the model and the application domain, implementation can range from writing custom software code to integrating pre-existing libraries or frameworks. Key steps in model implementation include software development, testing, validation, and deployment. Throughout this process, developers must

ensure that the implemented model is accurate, efficient, and scalable, and that it meets the requirements and expectations of end-users. Continuous monitoring and refinement may also be necessary to adapt the model to changing conditions or new insights. Overall, successful model implementation is essential for harnessing the predictive power of machine learning and other computational techniques to address real-world challenges and improve decision-making processes.

3.4. Model Evaluation

Model evaluation is a critical step in assessing the performance and effectiveness of a developed model or algorithm. It involves systematically measuring how well the model performs against predefined criteria or benchmarks. Evaluation metrics vary depending on the type of model and the specific task it is designed to address. For classification tasks, common evaluation metrics include accuracy, precision, recall, F1 score, and area under the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve. For regression tasks, metrics such as mean squared error (MSE), root mean squared error (RMSE), mean absolute error (MAE), and R-squared are often used. Additionally, depending on the application domain, other criteria such as computational efficiency, interpretability, and robustness to noise or outliers may also be considered. Model evaluation typically involves splitting the dataset into training and testing sets or employing techniques such as cross-validation to ensure unbiased assessment. Through rigorous evaluation, researchers and practitioners can identify strengths and weaknesses of the model, refine its design, and make informed decisions about its suitability for deployment in real-world scenarios.

3.5. Model Validation

Model validation plays a pivotal role in the assessment of the efficacy and adaptability of a developed model or algorithm. This crucial step entails scrutinizing how proficiently the model operates on unseen or out-of-sample data, thereby ensuring that its performance isn't excessively optimistic and that it can adeptly generalize to novel datasets. One prevalent method for model validation involves partitioning the dataset into distinct training and testing subsets. Here, the training set is utilized to train the model, while the testing set is employed to gauge its performance. Complementary to this, cross-validation techniques, such as k-fold cross-validation, are often leveraged to systematically validate the model by executing multiple train-test splits. Furthermore, techniques like bootstrapping or leave-one-out cross-validation can prove instrumental, especially for smaller datasets or scenarios where maximizing the utilization of available data is paramount. Through such meticulous validation processes, researchers can meticulously scrutinize the robustness and dependability of the model, pinpoint potential overfitting or underfitting issues, and make well-informed decisions regarding its applicability in real-world contexts.

Moreover, rigorous model validation serves as a cornerstone in the realm of data science and machine learning by providing a comprehensive understanding of the model's performance characteristics. By subjecting the model to diverse datasets and validation techniques, researchers gain invaluable insights into its behavior across varied scenarios. This not only aids in discerning the model's strengths and weaknesses but also fosters confidence in its utility for practical applications. Additionally, through the identification of overfitting or underfitting tendencies, researchers can fine-tune the model's parameters or explore alternative algorithms to enhance its performance and generalization capabilities. Such iterative refinement processes are essential for ensuring the reliability and efficacy of the model in real-world settings where it may encounter unforeseen data distributions or complexities. Thus, model validation stands as a cornerstone in the development and deployment of robust machine learning solutions, enabling practitioners to navigate the intricacies of data-driven decision-making with heightened assurance and precision.

| Category | Independent Variables | Description | Dependent Variables | Description |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| Financial Factors | Revenue Growth | Annual revenue growth of startups | Startup Success | Measured through growth, market expansion, and sustainability |
| Operational Factors | Amount of Raised Capital | Total capital raised by startups | | |
| Innovation Factors | Innovation Level | Innovation score based on products or services offered | | |
| User Factors | Number of Active Users | Number of monthly active users | | |

Table 1. Data Variables

The table above illustrates the performance evaluation results of a model or system based on several commonly used metrics in classification analysis. In this context, the model has been assessed using five main evaluation metrics: Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score, and Area Under ROC Curve (AUC). Accuracy achieved a value of 85.6, indicating the extent to which the model correctly classifies data overall. Precision reached 83.4, reflecting how well the model identifies true positives compared to the total predicted positives. Recall reached 82.9, measuring the model's ability to detect all true positive instances. The F1-Score, a combination of precision and recall, has a value of 83.1, providing a holistic view of the balance between the two metrics.

Finally, the Area Under ROC Curve (AUC) reached 88.2, measuring how well the model can differentiate between positive and negative classes. A higher AUC value indicates better performance in classification. Overall, the evaluation results indicate that the model performs well, with relatively high accuracy and a good balance between precision and recall, as reflected in the F1-Score. Additionally, the high AUC value demonstrates the model's effective ability to distinguish between positive and negative classes.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1 Effectiveness of TAM and Random Forest Integration

The integration of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the Random Forest algorithm successfully enhanced the accuracy of predicting startup success. This model is effective in identifying key factors such as technology adoption, market expansion, and user engagement as significant determinants of startup success.

2 Influence of Financial and Operational Factors

The investment received by startups and how they utilize that investment have a strong positive impact on success. Market expansion also proves to be a crucial indicator, suggesting that startups that successfully expand their market tend to be more successful.

3 Role of Innovation and Technology

The level of innovation and the adoption of new technologies by startups positively impact their success. User engagement with the products or services of a startup is also a critical factor, indicating that startups that successfully create high user engagement are more likely to succeed.

4 Implications for Stakeholders

These findings provide valuable insights for entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers. Understanding the factors influencing startup success can aid in making more informed and strategic decisions.

4.1. Validation Process:

4.1.1. Cross-Validation

A 10-fold cross-validation was conducted to assess the overall performance of the model. The model demonstrated consistency in performance across various subsets of data, indicating reliability and stability.

| Evaluation Metric | Value (%) |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Accuracy | 85.6 |
| Precision | 83.4 |
| Recall | 82.9 |
| F1-Score | 83.1 |
| Area Under ROC Curve | 88.2 |

Table 2. Random Forest Results

4.1.2. External Validity

The model was tested on a different dataset of startups to assess its generalization capability. External validation results showed similar performance, confirming the model's reliability in various contexts.

4.1.3. Sensitivity Analysis

Sensitivity analysis was performed to evaluate how changes in independent variables affect the dependent variable. The model exhibited good stability in response to variable changes, indicating its predictive strength.

| TAM Constructs | R-Square (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Perceived Ease of Use | 74.2 |
| Perceived Usefulness | 78.6 |
| Attitude toward Use | 81.1 |
| User Intention | 79.8 |

Table 3. R-Square (TAM Model)

4.2. Result Analysis

4.2.1. Perceived Ease of Use

With an R-Square of 74.2%, it indicates that 74.2% of the variability in the perception of ease of use can be explained by the independent variables in the model. This suggests that the measured factors in this study have a significant influence on how users perceive the ease of using the technology or product of the startup.

4.2.2. Perceived Usefulness

With an R-Square of 78.6%, it shows that 78.6% of the variability in the perception of usefulness can be explained by the independent variables. This indicates that the identified factors in the model have a strong influence on how users perceive the usefulness or benefits of the technology or product offered by the startup.

4.2.3. Attitude toward Use

An R-Square of 81.1% indicates that the majority (81.1%) of the variability in users' attitudes toward the use of technology or products can be explained by the variables in the model. This suggests that the model successfully identifies important factors influencing user attitudes.

4.2.4. User Intention

With an R-Square of 79.8% , it indicates that the model successfully explains 79.8% of the variability in user intention. This suggests that the measured factors in this study significantly influence the user's intention to use the technology or product offered by the startup.

Overall, the high R-Square values for each TAM construct indicate that this model effectively explains the variability in user perceptions and attitudes toward the technology or product offered by the startup. This reaffirms the importance of the measured factors in the TAM model and demonstrates the model's effectiveness in the context of this research.

The AVE values above 0.50, Alpha Cronbach, Composite Reliability values above 0.70, and HTMT values below 0.90 indicate good validity and reliability of the TAM constructs. This suggests that the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) constructs have strong internal validity and can effectively discriminate between different constructs, affirming the model's reliability in the context of this research.

| TAM Constructs | AVE | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | Discriminant Validity (HTMT) |
|-----------------------|------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Perceived Ease of Use | 0.68 | 0.82 | 0.87 | 0.85 |
| Perceived Usefulness | 0.71 | 0.85 | 0.89 | 0.88 |
| Attitude toward Use | 0.73 | 0.87 | 0.91 | 0.90 |
| User Intention | 0.75 | 0.89 | 0.93 | 0.92 |

Table 4. AVE, Discriminant Validity, and Reliability Test

Overall, these validation results and processes indicate that the developed model is an effective and reliable tool for predicting startup success, providing valuable insights for various stakeholders in the startup ecosystem.

5. CONCLUSION

Effectiveness of the Combined Model: The integration of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the Random Forest algorithm has unequivocally demonstrated its efficacy, boasting an impressive predictive accuracy of 85.6 in anticipating startup success. This compelling performance serves as a testament to the inherent superiority of the amalgamated model, affirming its unparalleled ability to discern and interpret the multifaceted factors that intricately shape the trajectory of startup success.

Key Success Factors: Within the intricate web of determinants influencing startup success, pivotal factors such as technology adoption, market expansion, and user engagement emerge as linchpins, exerting a profound and discernible impact on the dependent variable. The comprehensive analysis provided by the combined model sheds light on the nuanced interplay of these key success factors, offering stakeholders a granular understanding of the critical drivers steering the course of a startup's triumph.

Importance of Innovation and Investment Utilization: An in-depth exploration of the data underscores the unequivocal significance of innovation and the judicious utilization of investments in dictating the triumph of startups. The empirical evidence highlights a robust positive correlation between the level of innovation and efficient investment management, further accentuating the pivotal role played by these factors in the intricate ecosystem of startup success.

Validity and Reliability of the Model: Rigorous scrutiny of the predictive model reveals its effectiveness and high levels of validity and reliability. The TAM constructs exhibit substantial explanatory power, with R-Square values ranging impressively from 74.2 to 81.1. Moreover, standard criteria for AVE, Alpha Cronbach, and Composite Reliability are met, bolstering the confidence in the model's robustness and reinforcing its potential as a dependable tool for predictive analysis within the startup landscape.

This research yields a predictive model of exceptional robustness and reliability, providing nuanced insights tailored for entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers. The integrative approach employed in this study offers a holistic and intricate framework, equipping stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of the multifactorial landscape that governs startup success, thereby enriching decision-making processes and strategic interventions in the dynamic startup ecosystem.

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