



Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: Bridging the Digital Divide through Digital Marketing Technology Adoption

Antony Davis Mannummel^{1*}, Dr V. Bastin Jerome ²

^{1*}Research Scholar (Part-Time), Department of Commerce, St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, PINCODE – 620024, Email.ID: antonymannummel32@gmail.com

²Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, PINCODE - 620024. Email.ID : bastinjerome@gmail.com

Citation: Antony Davis Mannummel, Dr V. Bastin Jerome,(2024) Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: Bridging the Digital Divide through Digital Marketing Technology Adoption, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(5), 3566 - 3571
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i5.3488

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the impact of digital marketing technology adoption on the performance of women entrepreneurs, focusing on the challenges they face in adopting such technologies. Utilizing interviews and document studies with women entrepreneurs in Kochi, India, the research identifies key findings and discusses implications.

It reveals that most of women entrepreneurs are not aware of digital marketing technology, also showed that digital marketing technology adoption impacts on the performance of women entrepreneurs' businesses. Eventhough, digital marketing offers significant potential for business growth, women entrepreneurs encounter obstacles such as lack of technical skills, access to capital, gender bias, and work-life balance concerns. Policy implications and recommendations for both authorities and women entrepreneurs are outlined to address these challenges and enhance digital marketing adoption among women entrepreneurs in India.

KEYWORDS: Digital Marketing Technology, Women Entrepreneurs, Performance Impact, Digital Divide

Introduction:

This study focuses on studying the impact of digital marketing technology adoption on the performance of women entrepreneurs. It also highlights the problems faced by women entrepreneurs while adopting such technologies. Interview and document studies linked to several entrepreneurs in Kochi constitute the empirical basis for the study. This chapter summarises the main findings and discusses the possible implications of the empirical results. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future searches.

Digital marketing technology has completely changed the way businesses operate. It has given entrepreneurs previously unheard-of chances to reach a larger audience, cut expenses, and obtain important resources. Notwithstanding these benefits, obstacles frequently stand in the way of female businesses using and successfully utilizing digital marketing techniques. This study is to investigate how women entrepreneurs' performance is affected by the use of digital marketing tools, with a particular emphasis on the difficulties they encounter while incorporating these technologies into their enterprises. This study aims to offer insights into the present environment of digital marketing adoption among women entrepreneurs and suggest solutions to overcome obstacles and improve their digital presence through empirical research among women entrepreneurs in Kochi, India.

Objectives:

- To evaluate the extent of understanding and implementation of digital marketing technology among female entrepreneurs in Kochi, India.
- The objective is to assess the influence of using digital marketing technologies on the business performance of women entrepreneurs.
- To ascertain the obstacles encountered by female entrepreneurs in embracing digital marketing tools.

- The objective is to suggest policy implications and solutions that can assist women entrepreneurs in overcoming obstacles to adopting digital marketing and enhancing their business performance.

Methodology:

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining interviews and document studies to gather qualitative and quantitative data from women entrepreneurs in Kochi, India. The empirical basis for the study includes interviews with a diverse sample of women entrepreneurs, supplemented by document analysis of relevant literature and reports on digital marketing trends and women entrepreneurship in India. The data collected are analyzed using statistical methods and qualitative thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and insights regarding digital marketing technology adoption and its impact on women entrepreneurs' performance. Additionally, Garrett's ranking method is utilized to prioritize the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in adopting digital marketing technologies.

Internet users' distribution in the world

China remains the leading online market in the world, followed by India and the United States. Overall, East Asia has the highest number of internet users worldwide. In contrast, Northern Europe has the highest global internet penetration rate. Compared with countries like Iceland or Denmark, whose internet penetration rates are approaching 100 percent, China's online penetration rate is still relatively low at 58 percent. This setback can be explained by the slow progress of digital infrastructures in remote regions – an obstacle still visible in many parts of the world.

Most effective digital marketing techniques in the world

Global marketers have indicated that content marketing is the most effective digital method. When surveyed about the activity they believed will have the most commercial influence on their own or their clients' businesses, 17 percent indicated that content marketing would be the most significant. This was followed by marketing automation, big data, AI, and machine learning.

Countries with the most significant digital population in the world

China is the top country in terms of global Internet user population. The largest country in the world had a total of 1.02 billion Internet users, which is more than three times the number of Internet users in the United States, which had little over 307 million users. In all, the combined BRIC economies had a collective Internet user base of more than 100 million, accounting for four out of the eight nations worldwide that had surpassed the 100 million milestone. China is the leading country in terms of the biggest number of Internet users. With its ongoing and swift economic growth and cultural inclination towards technology, China has a staggering internet population of over 1.4 billion individuals.

Market size of the digital advertising industry in India from 2016-2022

In 2021, the digital advertising sector in India expanded to a market size over 200 billion Indian rupees, representing a substantial increase compared to the market size in 2016. The graph illustrates a consistent upward trend, indicating the continuous growth observed in recent years.

Digital advertising revenue in India from 2018-2022

The predicted value of digital advertising revenue in India for the year 2021 amounted to 246 billion Indian rupees. A total of approximately 700 billion Indian rupees were generated from advertising in India during the same year. Based on advertising expenditure, the country ranked among the largest advertising markets globally. In the fiscal year 2018, the Indian television advertising industry was valued at more than 250 billion rupees, making it the largest contributor to ad income. The print market came in second place. Nevertheless, the trend of each segment clearly indicates a discernible pattern in which the digital advertising industry will rapidly exceed earnings generated from print and television. The data presented clearly indicates that India is progressing towards a future dominated by digital advertising. The factors contributing to the surge of digital advertising in India are evident. The visible manifestation of a larger phenomenon is the escalating utilization of easily accessible, high-speed internet and the heightened intake of content that is tailored to specific regions. In addition, highly profitable industries such as banking, finance, and insurance are rapidly exploring alternative media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram stories to attract and interact with customers.

Unemployment rate and jobs gap, 2022

There is a significant disparity in employment opportunities between men and women. On a global scale, the unemployment rate for both men and women was comparable in 2022. Nevertheless, the 25 The occurrence rate of labor underutilization, which includes those who are willing to work but are not actively seeking employment, is comparable to the combined rate of unemployment and the potential labor force as defined in the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). The additional jobs gap can be calculated by dividing the sum of the prospective labor force and non-jobseekers who are willing to work by the sum of the extended labor force and non-jobseekers who are willing to work. In 2019, almost 40 percent of the additional

jobs gap was attributed to the prospective labor force, while the remaining portion consisted of individuals who desired employment but were neither available nor actively pursuing it. The disparity in employment rates between women and men is 15.0 percent for women and 10.5 percent for men. To clarify, there are 153 million more women who are recognized as lacking employment opportunities, compared to 115 million males. Individual and familial obligations, such as unpaid tasks, might hinder individuals from pursuing employment or limit their flexibility to work with little advance notice. These constraining constraints have a greater impact on women and account for the substantial disparity in this broader assessment of job underutilization. The disparity between the overall employment deficit and the rate of unemployment is particularly pronounced in emerging countries. There are two probable variables that are likely causing this. Initially, a significant prevalence of informality can diminish the likelihood of securing employment, so demotivating individuals who are actively seeking employment from continuing their job hunt. Furthermore, in poor countries, the capacity to commence a job promptly may be limited due to a greater allocation of time towards domestic responsibilities.

Rate of employability across India from 2015 to 2022

In 2022, there was an increase in the proportion of male and female employees in India compared to the previous year. In that particular year, the proportion of women in employment slightly above 51%. Since 2016, the proportion of women among India's employable talent has exceeded that of males. This expansion has had a beneficial impact on the country's business sector and societal frameworks. Indian businesses and employers have discovered a plethora of highly skilled graduates in regions such as Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. The preference for internships rose due to the higher demand for professionals with at least one year of work experience compared to graduates with no experience. The most employable candidates in 2022 were graduates in the fields of engineering, business administration, and pharmacology. Nevertheless, despite the enhanced potential for finding work, women have not been able to secure employment, as seen by the nation's unemployment rate. Furthermore, the involvement of women in employment was less in comparison to men. In the fourth quarter of 2021, a greater number of Indian men were employed compared to Indian women, as indicated by their engagement in the workforce.

Percentage Analysis of Personal Factors of the women entrepreneurs

Age

From the age-wise classification, 46.4 percent of the entrepreneurs belong to the age group of 39-48 years, while 16.7 percent belong to the 40-60 years age category, but only four entrepreneurs are in the more than 19-28 years category. Thus, it can be stated that most respondents are 39-48 years old, indicating that many middle-aged people have participated in the survey. It can also be inferred that people in this age group do business.

Marital Status

The classification of the entrepreneurs based on their marital status reveals that 72.8 percent are married. In contrast, the remaining 27.2 percent of the entrepreneurs are unmarried. The education-wise classification shows that most entrepreneurs are Graduates (36.8 percent), followed by 31.2 percent of postgraduates, 16 percent of whom are professionals. Only 5.2 percent of the entrepreneurs possess education up to the school level. It can be observed that 91.2 percent of the entrepreneurs are well-educated and qualified persons. These people have more dealings with the business as they may have more knowledge about business and various strategies.

Scale of Business

The sample entrepreneurs' business scale depicts that out of the total entrepreneurs, 35.2 percent have a medium-scale business, 34.8 percent have a micro-scale business, and 30 percent have a small-scale business.

Years of Experience

Most entrepreneurs have above six years of experience, i.e., 31.6 percent, and 26 percent by having 4-6 years. Entrepreneurs with up to 2 years of experience constitute 21.6 percent, and only 20.8 percent have 2-4 years of experience. Hence, it can be inferred that 79 entrepreneurs have more dealings in the business and do more trading.

Turnover

Based on the Turnover, it is understood that most (40.4 percent) of the entrepreneurs have high turnover, 30.8 percent have low turnover, and 28.8 percent have medium turnover. Women entrepreneurs with good experience can manage high turnovers, which is a positive performance by women.

Adoption of Digital marketing technology

Regarding digital marketing technology, 54.4 percent use digital technology at a low level. Thirty-two percent are medium users, whereas only 13.6 percent are high users. It is inferred that they need more confidence,

awareness and many other factors to use these technologies, so they cannot compete in the digital world properly.

Impact of digital marketing techniques adoption on the performance of the business of women entrepreneurs

The model fitness indices for the usage of digital marketing technology and the performance of women's entrepreneurial activities suggest that the normed chi-square (CMIN/DF) value from the table is 1.402. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.896, which falls between 0.8 and 0.9, indicating that the model fits well. The Normalized Average Square Residual Value (SRMR) is a fit measure that provides an absolute assessment of the model's accuracy. The term refers to the standardized discrepancy between the observed correlation and the expected correlation. The result shows that the SRMR value is 0.051, which is below the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the model fits exceptionally well. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.040, which is below the threshold of 0.08 and indicates that it aligns with the model. Pclose denotes the numerical value assigned to the null hypothesis. The value should exceed 0.05 in order to assert the model's exceptional fit. The study concludes that the utilization of digital marketing technology and the performance of women's entrepreneurial activities demonstrate that the CFA model is acceptable and appropriate. Therefore, the null hypothesis is refuted. The constructs identified through exploratory factor analysis have been validated. There is a strong correlation between the observed values and the conceptions. Once the reliability of each individual component in the model has been established, the next step is to test the validity of the model.

Problems faced by women entrepreneurs in adopting digital marketing technology.

Garrett's scores help to decide the most critical problems faced in adopting digital marketing technology by the women entrepreneurs in the study area. The highest score is 67.87, 1st rank for lack of human touch safety, and the lowest rank is 39.71. The last rank selected by the respondent is lack of effectiveness compared with traditional marketing strategy. It is inferred from these tables that a women entrepreneur worrying about the human touch element is missing in digital marketing technology. However, meta-concepts are emerging in marketing, which may help overcome this problem.

- **Lack of technical skills:** Many women entrepreneurs may need more technical skills and knowledge to effectively use digital marketing technology, limiting their ability to reach and engage with customers online.
- **Access to capital:** Women entrepreneurs often need help accessing capital, limiting their ability to invest in digital marketing technology and other tools to help grow their businesses.
- **Gender bias:** Women entrepreneurs may face gender bias in the tech industry, which can limit their access to mentorship, resources, and other support they need to grow their businesses.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Women entrepreneurs often need help balancing work and family responsibilities, which can limit the time and energy they must devote to growing their businesses and effectively using digital marketing technology.
- **Data privacy and security:** Protecting sensitive customer and business data concerns all entrepreneurs. However, women entrepreneurs may face additional challenges in this area, given the persistent gender pay gap and the underrepresentation of women in technology and leadership roles.
- **Lack of representation:** Women entrepreneurs must be more represented in the tech industry. As a result, digital marketing techniques may only sometimes be developed with the needs and perspectives of women-owned businesses in mind.

POLICY FOR IMPLICATION TO AUTHORITIES:

- **Provide training and support:** Many women entrepreneurs may not have the technical skills needed to use digital marketing technology effectively. Therefore, authorities can offer training programs to teach women entrepreneurs how to effectively use digital marketing tools and strategies. These training programs could be in the form of workshops, seminars, or online courses.
- **Offer financial incentives:** Authorities can offer financial incentives to women entrepreneurs who adopt digital marketing technology. This could include grants, loans, or tax credits. Financial incentives can help offset the cost of implementing digital marketing technology and make it more accessible to women entrepreneurs.
- **Facilitation of Networking Opportunities:** Authorities can facilitate networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs so they can reach out to digital marketing experts and other women entrepreneurs who have successfully adopted digital marketing technology. Networking can help women entrepreneurs learn about best practices, build relationships with potential partners, and gain access to new markets.
- **Develop digital marketing resources:** Authorities can create resources to help women entrepreneurs understand and implement digital marketing technology. This could include online

guides, tutorials, and case studies demonstrating how other women entrepreneurs have successfully used digital marketing to grow their businesses.

- **Collaborate with the private sector:** Authorities can collaborate with private sector companies that provide digital marketing services to offer discounted services to women entrepreneurs. This collaboration could help reduce the cost of digital marketing technology for women entrepreneurs.

TO WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

- **Identify Your Target Audience:** It is essential to know the ideal customer and where they spend their time online. This will help to create targeted campaigns that resonate with them.
- **Develop a Strong Brand:** The brand sets itself apart from its competitors. Build a strong brand identity, including a logo, color scheme and messages that reflect the company's values and personality.
- **Create a Website:** A website is the hub of digital marketing efforts. Ensure it is user-friendly, easy to use on mobile devices and optimized for search engines.
- **Utilize social media platforms:** Social media platforms provide a potent means of engaging with the intended demographic. Select channels that align with the objectives of the business and provide engaging content that resonates with the audience.
- **Investing in SEO :** It involves making strategic changes to a website in order to enhance its ranking in search engine result pages. This can enhance the website's appeal to a larger audience and boost its internet presence.
- **Utilize email marketing:** Email marketing is an influential method to establish connections with clients and nurture potential leads. Utilize email marketing as a means to provide information, promotions, and valuable resources.
- **Explore the potential of Influencer Marketing:** Collaborating with influencers can effectively expand your reach to untapped people and enhance brand recognition. Seek for influencers whose ideals and target audiences are in harmony.
- **Conduct thorough analysis and optimization:** Lastly, consistently evaluate digital marketing initiatives to determine their effectiveness and areas for improvement. Utilize data to create well-informed judgments and improve campaigns for enhanced outcomes.

CONCLUSION

There has been a substantial growth in the number of female entrepreneurs in India who are utilizing digital technologies in recent years. Women now have the capacity to begin and build their enterprises more effectively due to their enhanced capacity to reach a wider audience, reduce expenses, and acquire diverse tools and resources. The advent of digital technology in India has created fresh avenues for female entrepreneurs, thereby narrowing the gender disparity in the field of entrepreneurship. Despite the growing presence of female entrepreneurs in India, they struggle to adopt and utilize cutting-edge technologies to effectively compete in the market.

The current study demonstrates that a majority of female entrepreneurs lack awareness regarding digital marketing technology. Furthermore, it indicates that the adoption of digital marketing technology has a significant impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs' enterprises. Despite the substantial development potential that digital marketing offers for businesses, women entrepreneurs face various challenges including limited technical skills, restricted access to funding, gender bias, and concerns around work-life balance. The text outlines policy implications and solutions for both authorities and women entrepreneurs in order to overcome the hurdles and improve the adoption of digital marketing among women entrepreneurs in India.

Reference :

1. DeCarlo, J.F., & Lyons, P. (1979). A Comparison of Selected Personal Characteristics of Minority and Non-Minority Female Entrepreneurs.
2. Gangadhar, S., Bhat, M.S., & Malyadr, P. (2017). An Empirical Study on Microfinance and Women Empowerment in Karimnagar District of Telangana State, India. *International Business Management*, 14, 65-69.
3. Singal, S., & Srinivasan, K. (1990). Conceptual framework to study rural women's work patterns and economic contribution to family resource development. *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics*, 14, 341-346.
4. Sidhu Kiranjot and Kaur Sukhjeet (2006). Development of entrepreneurship among rural women. *Journal of Social Science*, 13(2): 147-149
5. Jyoti, J., Sharma, J., & Kumari, A. (2011). Factors affecting orientation and satisfaction of women entrepreneurs in rural India. *Annals of Innovation & Entrepreneurship*, 2(1), 5813. <https://doi.org/10.3402/aie.v2i1.7371>

6. Halkias, D., Nwajiuba, C.U., Harkiolakis, N., & Caracatsanis, S.M. (2011). Challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. *Management Research Review*, 34, 221-235.