





“Use of social media marketing by women entrepreneurs and its effect on business growth and success”

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USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND ITS EFFECT ON BUSINESS GROWTH AND SUCCESS

Abstract

The exponential rise of social media users has reshaped marketing and enabled entrepreneurs to access wider markets at minimal cost. This study examines how Social Media Marketing (SMM) practices influence the perceived business growth and success of women entrepreneurs in Assam, India, an emerging and under-researched context. The study aims to analyze the effects of SMM frequency, platform diversity, and customer-engagement activities on entrepreneurial growth outcomes. A descriptive quantitative design was applied. Primary data were collected through a structured, face-to-face survey conducted between January and June 2025 among registered women entrepreneurs in seven major urban-agglomeration cities of Assam: Guwahati, Silchar, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Nagaon, Tezpur, and Tinsukia. Respondents were selected based on two criteria: operating their businesses for at least one year and actively using social media for business purposes. A total of 206 valid responses were obtained. Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses.

The results show that frequent SMM use significantly enhances perceived business growth ($\beta = 0.716$), while using multiple platforms strongly predicts higher growth and success ($\beta = 0.810$). Engagement activities including prompt responses, interactive content, and customer-review sharing also significantly contribute to growth perceptions ($\beta = 0.803$). These findings quantitatively confirm that SMM functions not only as a promotional mechanism but also as a strategic enabler that strengthens women's entrepreneurial capabilities, visibility, and market reach. The study concludes that structured, multi-platform, engagement-oriented SMM strategies can meaningfully support the entrepreneurial development of women in emerging markets such as Assam.

Keywords

social media, entrepreneurship, growth, engagement, platform, promotion, marketing, women

JEL Classification

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has reshaped how entrepreneurs communicate with customers, promote their offerings, and compete in dynamic markets. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and LinkedIn have become central channels through which businesses build visibility, cultivate consumer relationships, and enhance brand value (Lagrosen & Josefsson, 2011; Lowe & Laffey, 2011). For micro and small enterprises, these platforms provide access to valuable resources, wider audiences, and low-cost promotional opportunities that were previously difficult to secure through traditional marketing channels (Group & Limited, 2013; He et al., 2017; Nakara et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2020). These benefits have made social media particularly important in emerging economies, where access to markets, capital, and formal support systems may be limited (Alzougool, 2019; Bouargan et al., 2020).

In India, the growing penetration of mobile internet and the spread of digital literacy have accelerated the adoption of social media for entrepreneurial activities. Women entrepreneurs, in particular, have used SMM as a cost-effective means to overcome gendered constraints related to mobility, financial limitations, and market access (Bhagat & Gupta, 2014; Nayana, 2019; Verma, 2024). Prior studies suggest that social media improves branding, enhances visibility, and enables women-led enterprises to connect with wider customer bases through personalized communication and online communities (Cesaroni et al., 2017). Research has also shown that SMM strengthens customer engagement and contributes to improved business performance in various sectors (Koay et al., 2022; Munir et al., 2021; Syaifullah et al., 2021). These developments have further intensified following the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many women-led micro and small enterprises turned to digital tools to sustain operations and build resilience (Rahayu et al., 2021).

Despite global evidence demonstrating the value of SMM for entrepreneurial development, several gaps remain in understanding how specific SMM practices shape business outcomes for women entrepreneurs in under-researched regional contexts such as Assam. Existing studies often focus on broad digital adoption trends or general SME performance, with limited attention to the mechanisms through which frequency of use, platform diversity, and engagement activities influence measurable business growth (Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020; Pourkhani et al., 2019; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). Furthermore, scholarly work on women entrepreneurs in Northeast India is scarce, and quantitative analyses remain particularly limited. Although some studies highlight the importance of SMM for resource acquisition, customer relationships, and brand development (Chakraborty & Biswal, 2023; Olanrewaju et al., 2020), little empirical research examines how these practices operate within Assam's unique socio-economic and cultural environment.

This lack of context-specific evidence creates a scientific problem: the relationship between social media marketing practices and business growth among women entrepreneurs in Assam remains insufficiently theorized and empirically validated. Given the region's rising digital participation and growing base of women-led enterprises, addressing this gap is critical for understanding how SMM can support entrepreneurial growth, income generation, and economic empowerment.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has become a central tool for entrepreneurial growth, allowing businesses to interact with customers, disseminate information rapidly, and create brand communities at minimal cost. Early studies established that platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter increasingly shape customer-firm relationships by enabling two-way communication and customer empowerment (Lagrosen & Josefsson, 2011; Lowe & Laffey, 2011). Subsequent work demonstrates that SMM provides entrepreneurs access to valuable resources, including customer insights, market intelligence, networking opportunities, and branding mechanisms (Nakara et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2020). A growing body of evidence shows that SMM adoption positively affects business visibility, customer engagement, brand value, and ultimately firm performance (Alzougool,

2019; Ananda et al., 2017; Bouargan et al., 2020; Odoom & Mensah, 2019).

Entrepreneurs integrate social media into marketing strategies to enhance competitiveness in digital markets. Creative digital marketing use of visual storytelling, SEO, copywriting, and targeted messaging enables small firms to reach audiences they otherwise could not access through traditional media (Bocconcelli et al., 2017; Lepkowska-White et al., 2019; Morris & James, 2017). Literature from the internationalization perspective shows that SMM helps SMEs develop global connections, improve brand positioning abroad, and enhance export performance (Eid et al., 2020; Fang et al., 2022; Virglerová et al., 2022). The growing reliance on digital media also supports B2B communication, with firms using social networking sites to build long-term relationships, gather information, and enhance market presence (Michaelidou et al., 2011).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when mobility restrictions slowed offline operations, SMM became an essential survival tool for micro and small enterprises. Studies show that social media adoption significantly improved performance, resilience, and customer maintenance during the crisis (Alhaimer, 2021; Camacho & Barrios, 2022; Duffy et al., 2021; Marolt et al., 2022; Munir et al., 2021; Olaleye et al., 2021; Syaifullah et al., 2021). Research further reveals that Indonesian SMEs, for example, strengthened their competitiveness through social media adoption driven by technological acceptance, social influence, and enterprise characteristics (Chang et al., 2015).

In India, SMM has become fundamental to entrepreneurial performance and marketing innovations. Social media plays a key role in expanding small business visibility, attracting customers, and increasing cost-effectiveness compared to traditional advertising (Azhar & Akhtar, 2020; Bhagat & Gupta, 2014). For women entrepreneurs specifically, digital branding enhances empowerment, confidence, and market participation (Nayana, 2019; Sujith & Aithal, 2022). Research consistently finds that the strategic use of SMM, including regular posting, relationship-building, and content creation, positively influences growth (Agrawal, 2021; Babu & Reddy, 2022; Chatterjee & Kumar Kar, 2020; Padhi & Sharma, 2022).

A growing body of empirical evidence from developing countries supports the connection between SMM and entrepreneurial performance. Research on women entrepreneurs in India and Bangladesh shows that platform diversity, engagement, and advertising expenditures strongly influence sales, customer acquisition, and brand visibility (Baral et al., 2023). Similar patterns appear in Yemen, where effective SMM use improved sales and customer base expansion (AL-Maamari et al., 2024). In Sri Lanka, mixed-method evidence indicates that frequent posting enhances market learning and customer knowledge (Silva & Hansson, 2024). Studies during COVID-19 also show that social media strengthened resilience and business continuity (Alam et al., 2022; Duffy et al., 2021).

Theoretical perspectives support these findings. Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz et al., 1973) explains why customers engage with digital con-

tent based on psychological needs. COBRA model highlights how user behaviors consuming, contributing, and creating content shape brand outcomes (Jiménez-Zarco et al., 2021). Social Proof Theory explains trust formation through reviews and online visibility (Sanak-Kosmowska, 2021). Media Richness Theory and S-O-R frameworks further explain platform effectiveness in generating engagement and behavioral responses. Structural equation modelling and other empirical approaches validate the positive impact of SMM on business performance across sectors and countries (Alalwan et al., 2017; Marolt et al., 2022; Olanrewaju et al., 2020; Tajvidi & Karami, 2021).

Prior research highlights three critical dimensions of SMM that significantly shape business performance: frequency of use, multi-platform adoption, and customer engagement. These constructs represent the dominant mechanisms through which entrepreneurs leverage social media to reach customers, build trust, and drive growth.

1.1. Frequent use of social media

Frequent and consistent use of social media greatly enhances business's visibility, customer engagement, and market reach. Literature consistently indicates that businesses that post regularly or engage daily with customers experience improved performance outcomes. Charoensukmongkol and Sasatanun (2017) found that Thai microenterprises using social media daily for CRM reported a 25% increase in business performance satisfaction. S. Laskar and H. Laskar (2025) also found a significant association between frequency of SMM use and business growth among women entrepreneurs, consistent with research in hotel and service industries showing revenue increases linked to frequent digital engagement (Tajvidi & Karami, 2021).

Frequent posting strengthens brand recall, encourages customer responses, and sustains customer interest. Studies from Thailand and Iran show that frequent SMM increases brand awareness by more than 50% (Pourkhani et al., 2019). Platform-specific research further shows that regular engagement yields different returns depending on the platform: Instagram and

Facebook generate higher engagement for B2C firms, while LinkedIn is more effective for B2B networking and lead generation (He et al., 2017).

Women entrepreneurs particularly benefit from frequent SMM activity. Research from Sri Lanka shows that daily posting improves customer insights, expands market knowledge, and fosters empowerment (Silva & Hansson, 2024). Studies in India and Indonesia also confirm that regular social media use enhances resilience during crises (R. Rahayu & Sudarmiatin, 2022).

Overall, the literature provides extensive evidence that frequent SMM use is strongly linked to improved visibility, stronger customer relationships, and enhanced business growth.

1.2. Use of multiple social media platforms

Using multiple social media platforms creates complementary effects that significantly expand market reach. Studies demonstrate both direct and spillover effects across platforms: activity on one platform enhances engagement on another (Narayanan et al., 2012). Research on more than 2,000 online stores shows that businesses using multi-platform strategies experienced a 2 to 5% increase in sales due to overlapping impressions and repeated brand exposure (Wang et al., 2025).

The literature also emphasizes spillover and carryover effects, where engagement on one platform (e.g., Instagram) drives traffic and attention on another (e.g., Facebook). Small and medium enterprises benefit from diversified platform strategies that enhance visibility, broaden customer exposure, and support global outreach (Pellegrino et al., 2023). Multichannel marketing theory supports these findings, demonstrating that reinforcing brand messages across platforms strengthens familiarity, trust, and purchase intention (Jha & Verma, 2023; Kapoor et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence from India, Bangladesh, and other emerging economies suggests that multi-platform adoption helps entrepreneurs reach wider audiences and increase brand interaction. For women entrepreneurs, multi-platform outreach provides access to new customer segments, digi-

tal communities, and niche online groups, which help overcome traditional market constraints (Cesaroni et al., 2017).

Collectively, the literature establishes multi-platform usage as a central determinant of business performance, customer acquisition, and digital reach.

1.3. Increased customer engagement

Customer engagement is one of the most powerful drivers of business performance in digital environments. Studies consistently find that likes, comments, shares, and review interactions significantly increase purchase intention and trust (Issam & Mohd Said, 2024). Instagram-based engagement significantly improves brand equity and sales, particularly in fashion and lifestyle sectors (Bashir et al., 2019).

Engagement facilitates emotional connection, customer trust, and community building key factors influencing purchases. Research from the UK shows that customer comments and online reviews contribute directly to booking revenue in hospitality (Tajvidi & Karami, 2021). Engagement-driven strategies also expand reach through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and social proof effects.

Women entrepreneurs particularly rely on interactive engagement as a relationship-building tool. Studies in India, Australia, and Egypt show that women emphasize authenticity, community building, and two-way communication, which strengthen customer loyalty and brand identity (Cesaroni et al., 2017; Jiménez-Zarco et al., 2021). Engagement strategies – responding promptly, sharing customer testimonials, and posting interactive content – enhance consumer trust and accelerate business growth.

These collective findings demonstrate that customer engagement is a critical behavioral mechanism through which SMM translates into business success.

The existing literature clearly indicates that SMM plays a significant role in business growth across diverse contexts. Frequent posting increases vis-

ibility and customer interaction, multi-platform strategies expand reach through spillover effects, and engagement behaviors foster trust and loyalty. However, despite strong global evidence, limited empirical research explores how these specific SMM practices influence business success among women entrepreneurs in Assam, culturally and economically distinct region.

This study aims to examine the effect of frequency of SMM use, multi-platform adoption, and customer engagement activities on the perceived business growth and success of women entrepreneurs in Assam.

The hypotheses are as follows:

H1: There is a significant effect of frequency of using social media marketing practices on the perceived business growth and success of women entrepreneurs.

H2: There is a significant effect of using multiple social media platforms on the perceived business growth and success of women entrepreneurs.

H3: There is a significant effect of frequency of using social media marketing practices on the perceived business growth and success of women entrepreneurs.

2. METHODOLOGY

The type of research in this study is descriptive in nature. This study explores the effect of using social media marketing on women entrepreneurs' growth and success using a quantitative approach.

The methodological procedure was implemented systematically to maintain accuracy, consistency, and transparency. The population consisted of women entrepreneurs registered with the Commissionerate of Industries and Commerce, Government of Assam. Only women who had been operating their business for at least one year and were active users of social media for business purposes were included, as these characteristics ensured relevant exposure to digital marketing practices. The sampling frame was created us-

ing the official registry of women-owned enterprises located in seven major cities: Guwahati, Silchar, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Nagaon, Tezpur, and Tinsukia. These locations were selected as they represent Assam's primary urban-agglomeration centres, characterized by higher concentrations of entrepreneurial activity and stronger digital infrastructure.

The sample size was calculated using Yemane's formula (Yamane & Taro, 1967) with 95% confidence level, taking 7% margin of error. The total population of women entrepreneurs is 991 in all 8 cities of Assam (under urban agglomeration, according to the census 2012); therefore, the minimum sample size of the study was 170. A total of 250 respondents were collected. Of 250 questionnaires distributed, 206 were retained for final analysis, as 44 respondents did not meet the social media usage criteria.

To provide a structured overview of respondent characteristics, the demographic profile is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Under 18	25	12.1
	18-24	114	55.3
	25-34	48	23.3
	35-44	15	7.3
	Above 45	4	1.9
Education qualification	High school or below	37	18.0
	Undergraduate	73	35.4
	Postgraduate	74	35.9
Years of business operation	Other	22	10.7
	Less than 3 years	104	50.5
	3-5 years	45	21.8
	5-7 years	37	18.0
	7-10 years	16	7.8
	More than 10 years	4	1.9

The majority of respondents were aged between 18 and 24 years (55.3%), indicating a young entrepreneurial demographic. Regarding education, a substantial proportion held undergraduate (35.4%) and postgraduate (35.9%) degrees, reflecting relatively high educational attainment among the women entrepreneurs sampled. In terms of business experience, half of the respondents (50.5%)

had been operating their businesses for less than 3 years, suggesting a large number of early-stage entrepreneurs in the sample.

Ethical protocols were rigorously followed. Verbal informed consent was obtained from every participant after explaining the study’s purpose and voluntary nature. No personal identifiers were recorded, and the confidentiality of participants was strictly maintained. Because the study involved minimal-risk survey data, formal ethics committee approval was not required. Impartiality was upheld by avoiding incentives and by delivering each question verbatim to prevent interviewer bias. The dataset used in this study is entirely original and has not been used in any previous publication, meeting the journal’s requirement that survey data must not be reused.

The survey instrument consisted of four constructs: Social Media Participation, Customer Engagement Activities, and Business Growth & Success, measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). All items were adapted from previously validated studies to ensure theoretical consistency and contextual relevance.

To confirm measurement reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha values were computed for each construct.

Table 2. Scale development

Variables	Authors	Number of items	Likert scale
Social Media Participation	Chakraborty and Biswal (2023)	4	5
Customer Engagement Activities	Jiménez-Zarco et al. (2021)	3	5
Business Growth & Success	Chatterjee et al. (2021), Jeong and Yoo (2022)	4	5

Table 3. Items and their Cronbach’s Alpha

Codes	Items	Reliability
FU1	I use social media for business purposes several times daily.	0.718
FU2	I post stories, status and updates frequently about the products in social media.	
MP1	I use more than a single social media platform for my business.	0.775
MP2	I use multiple social media platforms to reach diverse and wider audiences	
EA1	I respond to customer queries within 24 hours.	0.867
EA2	I post content that encourages customer interaction and engagement.	
EA3	I encourage customer reviews and share them on my page.	
PGS1	I have seen increase in my sales after using social media.	0.922
PGS2	The number of repeat customers has grown due to online engagement	
PGS3	I believe social media contributes significantly to the overall success of my business	
PGS4	I feel my business has become more visible after adopting social media.	

Note: FU = Frequency of Use, MP = Use of Multiple Platforms, EA = Engagement Activities, PGS = Perceived Growth and Success.

All values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70, demonstrating high internal consistency. The reliability results are summarized further.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Inferential analysis was conducted using regression analysis, as recommended by (Singhal & Padhmanabhan, 2008), to examine the effect of social media marketing practices on perceived business growth and success.

Effect of frequency of social media use on perceived business growth and success

H1: The frequency of using social media marketing has a significant effect on the perceived business growth and success of women entrepreneurs.

Table 4. Model summary for Hypothesis 1

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.716 ^a	.513	.511	.5610

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Frequency of Use.

The model explained 51.3% of the variance in Perceived Growth and Success ($R^2 = 0.513$), indicating that a substantial predictive power of the frequency of social media use.

Table 5. ANOVA and coefficient table for Hypothesis 1

Model fit					
	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	67.617	1	67.617	214	.000
Residual	64.210	204	0.315		
Total	131.827	205			
Coefficient table					
Predictors	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	0.824	0.232		3.547	.000
Frequency of use	0.784	0.053	0.716	14.657	.000

Interpretation

The regression coefficient was significant ($\beta = 0.716$, $t = 14.66$, $p < .001$), indicating that greater Frequency of Use is associated with increased Perceived Growth and Success. Strong positive standardized effect is $t = 14.657$, $p < .001$: This predictor was highly significant.

Effect of using multiple social media platforms on perceived business growth and success

H2: There is a significant effect of using multiple social media platforms on women entrepreneurs' perceived business growth and success.

Table 6. Model summary for Hypothesis 2

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.810 ^a	.656	.654	.4714

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Multiple Platform.

Interpretation

The model explained 65.6% of the variance in perceived growth and success ($R^2 = 0.656$), indicating a strong predictive relationship.

Table 7. ANOVA and coefficient table for Hypothesis 2

Model fit					
	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	86.486	1	86.486	389.126	0.000
Residual	45.341	204	0.222		
Total	131.827	205			
Coefficient table					
Predictors	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	0.837	0.173		4.845	0.000
Multiple platform	0.805	0.041	0.810	19.726	0.000

Interpretation

The regression analysis shows a strong, statistically significant and positive relationship between multiple platform usage and Perceived Growth and Success. Multiple platforms significantly predict growth and success, with a positive effect size of a 0.805 units increase in the dependent variable per unit increase in the predictor.

Effect of engagement activities on perceived business growth and success

H3: There is a significant effect of the frequency of using social media marketing practices on the perceived business growth and success of women entrepreneurs.

Table 8. Model summary for Hypothesis 3

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.803 ^a	.645	.643	.4792

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), Engagement Activities.

The model summary in Table 8 shows 64.5% of the variance in perceived business growth and success ($R^2 = 0.645$), indicating a strong explanatory power.

Table 9. ANOVA and coefficient table for Hypothesis 3

Model Fit					
	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	84.975	1	84.975	370.000	0.000
Residual	46.851	204	0.230		
Total	131.827	205			

Coefficient table					
Predictors	B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	1.048	0.166		6.300	0.000
Engagement Activities	0.759	0.039	0.803	19.235	0.000

Interpretation

Regression analysis indicated that Engagement Activities strongly and positively predicted Perceived Growth and Success. The model fit was significant ($F = 370.00, p < .001$). The predictor customer engagement activities are highly significant, indicating that increased engagement activities are associated with higher perceived growth and success.

Therefore, all three hypotheses indicate that frequency of use, use of multiple platforms, and engagement activities significantly influence women entrepreneurs’ perceptions of their business growth and success. The models explain substantial variance (51.3% - 65.6%), suggesting that social media marketing practices play a crucial role in entrepreneurial outcomes in the context of Assam.

This study investigated the effect of SMM practices on women entrepreneur’s the perceived business growth and success in Assam. Three key dimensions were examined: frequency of social media use, use of multiple platforms, and customer engagement activities. The results show that how often people use social media has a significant impact on how they view business growth and success. Previous studies (Charoensukmongkol & Sasatanun, 2017; Tajvidi & Karami, 2021) have shown that using social media frequently can help brands get more attention, build better relationships with customers, and increase sales. Frequent posting ensures that firms stay in the customers mind, giving them a great chance of interaction and building strong brand presence. For women entrepreneurs in Assam, who often operate with limited offline market access, frequent social media use bridges resource gaps and offers continuous customer touchpoints, thereby driving perceived growth.

Similarly, using more than one social networking platform was clear evidence that a firm was doing well and growing. This finding is in line with the multichannel marketing framework (Schultz & Schultz, 1998) and real-world evidence from Wang et al. (2025), which shows that using multiple platforms can help brands reach more customers by making them more familiar with the brand and more likely to buy it. Women entrepreneurs can use Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to reach different kinds of individuals, get more people to see their posts, and vary the way they post based on how people use each network.

Additionally, engagement activities such as encouraging reviews, prompt responses to queries, and posting interactive content had a significant influence on how people perceived business growth and succeeded. This aligns with studies by Koay et al. (2020), (Sagheer et al., 2022), which demonstrate that customer engagement builds trust, strengthens brand and consumer relationships, and drives sales. Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz et al., 1973) also supports this, suggesting that customers interact with brands that meet their social and psychological needs through real and interactive content.

These results collectively support the premise that SMM is not merely a promotional tool but also a strategic enabler of women’s entrepreneurial success and empowerment, particularly in resource-constrained environments like Assam. By enhancing market reach, brand visibility, and customer relationships, social media mitigates the structural barriers faced by women entrepreneurs, such as mobility constraints, limited capital, and access to formal markets. Despite these positive findings, some limitations of this study warrant consideration. First, the cross-

sectional nature of the study limits causal inferences. Second, the sample was dominated by young, digitally literate entrepreneurs, potentially excluding older women or those in rural areas with lower digital access. Third, while frequency, platform diversity, and engagement were studied,

other critical variables such as content creation behavior, advertising spending, and algorithm literacy remain unexplored within this dataset, despite their theoretical relevance as highlighted in the literature review (Chakraborty & Biswal, 2023; Jha & Verma, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine how social media marketing practices: frequency of use, multi-platform engagement, and customer interaction affect the perceived business growth and success of women entrepreneurs in Assam. The findings show that frequent use of social media is strongly associated with enhanced business growth, as regular posting and active online presence increase visibility, customer connection, and brand familiarity. The results also indicate that using multiple social media platforms significantly expands market reach and improves perceptions of business success by enabling tailored content distribution to diverse audiences. Furthermore, customer engagement activities: such as prompt responses, interactive posts, and sharing customer reviews emerged as strong predictors of business growth by fostering trust, loyalty, and community-driven marketing.

This study contributes to the literature by empirically validating the impact of frequency, platform diversity, and engagement activities on women entrepreneurs' business outcomes in an under-researched regional context. It reinforces the relevance of Uses and Gratification Theory, Multichannel Marketing Framework, and COBRA model within digital entrepreneurship research. By integrating these perspectives, this study advances the understanding of how social media acts as an enabler for women's economic participation in emerging markets.

For practitioners, the findings suggest that women entrepreneurs should prioritize consistent, multi-platform engagement and invest in relationship-oriented content strategies to optimize growth outcomes. Policymakers and entrepreneurial support organizations should design targeted digital literacy programs focusing on multi-platform strategies, content creation, and data analytics skills to effectively empower women entrepreneurs.

Key limitations include the cross-sectional design, potential sample bias towards digitally active women, and exclusion of other SMM variables such as advertising spending and influencer marketing. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to assess causal effects, explore mediating mechanisms such as psychological empowerment and innovation capabilities, and expand the scope to compare women entrepreneurs across different Indian states and global South contexts. Integrating advanced statistical models, such as structural equation modelling, and qualitative insights can also deepen the understanding of how social media shapes women's entrepreneurial ecosystems.

The study concludes that SMM serves as a powerful enabler of women's economic participation in emerging markets, offering accessible pathways to visibility, customer expansion, and sustained business development.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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