

Role of Social Media in Female Entrepreneurial Growth: Empirical study of Sindh using Facebook and Instagram

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Abstract

The research overviews the role of social media in accelerating the growth of female entrepreneurship. With the help of social networking, female entrepreneurs have found a new and effective way to run their businesses. Social Media has modified the concept of Female Entrepreneurship by providing them with ease and a mass medium through which they can run their business by preserving their privacy. Many female entrepreneurs run their online pages for buying and selling either independently or through some social media community which connects them to their customers directly. Whether it is a make-up artist or cook, a buyer of imported makeup or even a freelancer, social media has given a platform to female entrepreneurs to connect easily to customers directly with no intermediate. This research can contribute to taking measures towards female entrepreneurship growth as the results show a positive relationship between promotion, work-life balance, customer relationship management and female entrepreneurial growth through social media. This research shows evidence that social media has contributed a lot to female entrepreneurs by providing them with a platform through which they can efficiently run a business. This research is limited to Sindh only.

Keywords: *Female Entrepreneurship, Social Media Marketing, Facebook, Instagram.*

JEL Classification: *M30, M31, M39*

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has a 49.2% female population (Countrymeters,2020). and the female labour force has increased from 18.43% in 1990 to 24.1% in 2019 (The Global Economy). Still, Pakistan has the world's lowest rate of women's entrepreneurship with 1% of female entrepreneurs to 21%

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of male entrepreneurs according to the World Bank. (The News - International).

The gap could be because of two basic categories; the first category comprises social, cultural, traditional and religious elements, in which numerous factors like family pressure, domestic responsibilities and gender roles in marriage can hinder their growth. Second category comprising of policy documents constitutional structures, institutional mechanisms and regulatory arrangements. Due to the lower literacy rate, it cannot be possible when females to be discouraged from obtaining higher education. Whether it is considered a responsibility or restriction, it hinders women's entrepreneurship growth and one way or another serves as an obstacle to the growth of the country's GDP.

The rise in female entrepreneurship can be seen in the past decade because of inflation, unemployment, technology, media exposure and globalization. Social Media Marketing is widely used to promote brands as owned, paid and earned media. With the help of social networking, female entrepreneurs have found a new and effective way to run their businesses. Whether online buying and selling or promotion, social media is effective and one of the most influential media that can bring the Brand to success with comparatively lower efforts and costs in no time. Social Media has modified the concept of Female Entrepreneurship by providing them with ease and a mass medium through which they can run their business by preserving their privacy. Many female entrepreneurs run their online pages for buying and selling either independently or through some social media community which connects them to their customers directly. Whether it is a make-up artist or cook, a buyer of imported makeup or even a freelancer, social media has given a platform to female entrepreneurs to connect easily to customers directly with no intermediate. The current trend of female entrepreneurship through social media has been observed which is emerging, especially in the cities like Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Hyderabad. Virtual communities like Soul Sisters Pakistan, Shops, Buy Sell and Swap, all about make-up and Queen's Lounge have given a platform to women to promote their businesses equally where they don't have to interact with men.

This research will highlight the evidence of how social media can contribute to female entrepreneurs by providing them with a platform through which they can efficiently run a business. This research is limited to Sindh only. This is one of the first studies that provide empirical evidence of the success of female entrepreneurship through social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even after all these years of independence, the government's focus is on violence against women, women's healthcare and education rather than women's economic development. Despite the government's efforts and commitments to reducing gender inequalities, no proper action plan can be found for women's socio-economic growth status (SMEDA). Although SMEDA guides females in the areas like:

- Offices on affordable rents
- Display areas
- Specialized training programs to improve the employability of females through diversification in professional skills
- Direct guidance and support to young and creative potential female entrepreneurs

- Building a solid network of Women Business
- Information on business documentation

Female Entrepreneurship and Social Media

Social media offers computer-mediated tools that allow people or companies to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to relations between businesses, organizations, communities, and individuals (Agerdal-Hjermand, 2014). In particular, social media can make new ways of networking and doing business possible based on innovative concepts such as sharing, collaboration and co-creation (Antes and Schuelke, 2011). The arrival of social media has undoubtedly opened up windows of new opportunities for women (Mukolwe & Korir, 2016). Today's networks are becoming more virtual, and we wonder how the importance of relational capital is transformed and is also used virtually, especially in those countries where it is difficult to create (for various reasons) a real network

Social media can open up new opportunities for female entrepreneurs, and encourage the creation of new women-run businesses, thanks to their flexibility and attributes. Moreover, social media can support women in business to express their capabilities in networking by building virtual communities. Finally, it can also be seen as a means to take care of personal relationships, which can be relevant for women in business that, in most cases, have to balance their private life responsibilities with work commitments (Perrons, 2010; Drew and Murtagh, 2005; Emslie and Hunt, 2009).

Social media being the pervasive medium of communication, can boost the idea of the creation and sharing of information through pages and mainly virtual communities. Virtual communities like Soul Sisters Pakistan, Sheops, Buy Sell and Swap, all about make-up and Queen's Lounge have given a platform to women to promote their businesses equally where they don't have to interact with men.

Limited resources like limited budget, time and luxury to put more effort serve as factors which drive the motivation to start up the business from home where you don't have to pay utility bills, you don't need startup capital or human resource to manage your business. With the help of social media, you only need a smartphone/laptop and an internet connection to start a business.

There are only a few studies which have enlightened the topics like Female entrepreneurship in Pakistan, and despite the current trend, fewer studies are there which highlight the role of social media in Female Entrepreneurship. Some of the studies and their findings have been mentioned below.

Study	Methodology	Findings
Women in business and social media: Implications for female entrepreneurship in emerging countries	Scopus	These analyses have clearly shown that the use of social media can help women to enlarge their network and, in so doing, can profoundly affect women's conditions, not only in their business life but mainly in their private, family and social life.

Social Media and the Creation of Entrepreneurial Opportunity for Women in Bangladesh	Multiple Regression ANOVA	Positive relation between Product Improvement, 'Work-life Balance', 'Network Building', 'Access to Information', 'Cost Efficiency', 'Promotions' and Entrepreneur Opportunities
The Social Media and Entrepreneurship Growth - Nairobi	Correlation Analysis	No impact from pricing through social media Weak relationships arising from innovation in social media A positive effect of social media on the growth of SMEs via CRM

Figure 1: Related Studies and its Findings

Research Framework

The conceptual structure consists of five variables out of which four are independent and one is dependent.

Independent Variables

Promotion

For any brand/ business, promotion is required to make the population aware of the business and plant its image in people's minds. Promotion of any kind will take up to 30% of the investment. Social media makes it easier for an entrepreneur to promote business reasons. And how social can contribute to the promotion of female entrepreneurs' businesses.

Cost Efficiency

Any business startup requires factors of production, i.e., land, labour and capital. Since the females have limited resources because of domestic responsibilities and limited connection to the outer world, they face the problem of capital raising to start up a business. In this research, it will be apparent how cost efficient is social media in female entrepreneurship.

Customer Relationship Management

An essential aspect of today's business is how you value the customer. Where established businesses are in the run to satisfy the customer by any means, the customer is getting more robust due to the increased competition in the market where the customer is the king and has control over what he wants. In this crucial situation, customer relationship is very much necessary to maintain long-term relations with customers and get insight into their future needs and buying behaviour. Social media provides this ease as it is a tool for direct marketing. Here, it will be highlighted how female entrepreneurs are trying to maintain customer relationships through social media.

Work-Life Balance

In Asia, females must perform their domestic duties. Because of the cultural stigmas and norms, they are somehow bound not to leave their homes and to perform duties like raising their

children, taking care of their parents, cooking and other household responsibilities. A situation like they are running their business from home side by side with their household responsibilities is provided by social media. The research will enlighten how female entrepreneurs maintain a work-life balance while running their businesses through social media.

Dependent Variable

Female Entrepreneurship

The rise in female entrepreneurship can be seen in the past decade because of inflation, unemployment, technology, media exposure and globalization. Social Media Marketing is widely used to promote brands as owned, paid and earned media. With the help of social networking, female entrepreneurs have found a new and effective way to run their businesses. Whether online buying and selling or promotion, social media is effective and one of the most influential media that can bring the Brand to success with comparatively lower efforts and costs in no time. Social Media has modified the concept of Female Entrepreneurship by providing them with ease and a mass medium through which they can run their business by preserving their privacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

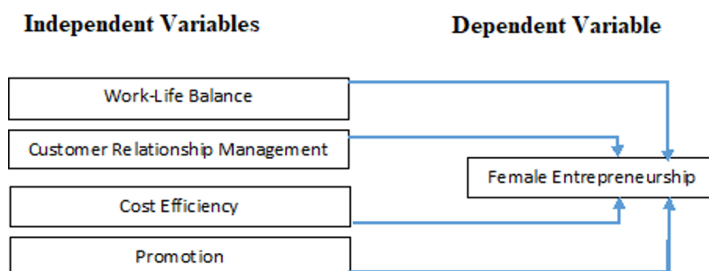


Figure 2: Research Framework

Problem Statement/ Research Gap

There are limited studies which enlighten the topics like Female Entrepreneurship. Fewer studies highlight the role of social media in Female Entrepreneurship. And despite the current trend, few studies have been conducted in Pakistan in this regard. This research will highlight the relationship and essential factors that can contribute to developing female entrepreneurship in Pakistan, starting from Sindh.

Hypotheses

H1: Social media provides ease in managing CRM to female entrepreneurs.

H2: It is easier for female entrepreneurs to have a work-life balance if they are startups/ running their businesses through social media.

H3: Social media happen to be cost-efficient for Female entrepreneurs.

H4: Social media provides an efficient platform for Female Entrepreneurs to promote their business.

Research Approach

The research is quantitative for which the software SPSS has been used. The population of the research is the “Female entrepreneurs who use social media to run their business. A purposive sampling technique has been used to collect the data with a sample size of 200 from the different areas of Sindh including Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Nawabshah.

Tools and Tests

The research tool is the survey questionnaire to be exact. The Questionnaire is designed and has an internal consistency of 97%, meaning the questionnaire is reliable and fit for use. Additionally, pilot testing was done with a sample size of 20 to check its validity.

ANOVA and regression will be used to test the hypotheses to give empirical proof of the causal relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

Significance of Study

Even after all these years of independence, the focus of the government is on violence against women, women’s healthcare and education rather than the economic development of women. Despite the government’s efforts and commitment to reducing gender inequalities, no proper action plan can be found for women’s socio-economic growth status (SMEDA).

Pakistan has a 49.2% female population (Countrymeters,2020). and the female labour force has increased from 18.43% in 1990 to 24.1% in 2019 (The Global Economy). Still, Pakistan has the world’s lowest rate of women’s entrepreneurship with 1% of female entrepreneurs to 21% of male entrepreneurs according to the World Bank. (The News - International).

This research highlights the role of social media in female entrepreneurship and the factors necessary to them through which the authorities can have insight and may introduce various programs. Programs to provide the essentials like training and development, internet connection, awareness, and loans to boost female entrepreneurship can be very profitable in the long term. Though it's in the pipeline for Punjab, this can also be planned for Sindh.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure.3 shows the demographics of female entrepreneurs. Most females who started and operate their businesses through social media belong to the age group of 31-40. The sample size is 200 and is collected from the different areas of Sindh: Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Nawabshah.

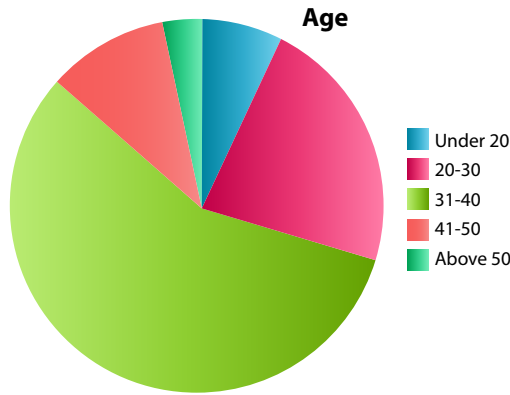


Figure 3: Age Group of the women operating business.

Relation Between Customer Relationship Management and Entrepreneurial Growth

Table 1: Results of H1 - Relation between Customer Relationship Management and Entrepreneurial Growth.

Anova ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
1	Regression	42.707	1	42.707	47.497	.000 ^b
	Residual	37.765	42	.899		
	Total	80.472	43			

a:Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial_Growth

b:Predictors: (Constant), CRM

The result shows a significant positive relationship between customer relationship management and entrepreneurial growth. The main challenge for any business is to maintain its customer relations. For female entrepreneurs, there can be multiple reasons why they cannot be in contact with the customers directly could cultural values or resources as well. But Customer relationships could be done more efficiently and effectively through social media as females will not have to be in contact with anyone directly but through social media. On the other hand, social media could be managed by them or any other family member at a very reasonable price.

Relation Between Work-Life Balance and Entrepreneurial Growth.

Table 2: Results of H2 - Relation between Work-Life Balance and Entrepreneurial Growth.

Anova ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
1	Regression	28.601	1	28.601	23.158	.000 ^b
	Residual	51.871	42	1.235		
	Total	80.472	43			

a:Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial_Growth

b:Predictors: (Constant), Work_Life_Balance

The result here, shows that positive relation between work-life balance and female entrepreneurial growth. In Pakistan, the gender roles are well defined where the domestic responsibilities are considered to be the Female gender role. Most females give up their careers to make their homes and perform domestic responsibilities. The research shows that females can achieve a Work-life balance if they use social media for starting u their businesses because social media doesn't require conventional 9-5 timings or the desk setup. It can be operated remotely or on the site as well.

Relation Between Cost Efficiency and Entrepreneurial Growth.

Anova ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
	Regression	.949	1	.949	.501	.483 ^b
1	Residual	79.523	42	1.893		
	Total	80.472	43			

a:Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial_Growth

b:Predictors: (Constant), Cost_Efficiency

Table 3: Results of H3 - Relation between Cost Efficiency and Entrepreneurial Growth.

The table above shows the negative result between Cost efficiency and Entrepreneurial growth. There is no significant impact of social media on cost efficiency as the sample collected. Social media doesn't affect the overall fixed or variable cost of business.

Relation Between Promotion and Entrepreneurial Growth.

Anova ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
	Regression	39.591	1	39.591	40.674	.000 ^b
1	Residual	40.882	42	.973		
	Total	80.472	43			

a:Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial_Growth

b:Predictors: (Constant), Promotion

Table 4: Results of H4 - Relation between Promotion and Entrepreneurial Growth.

Here, the positive relationship between Promotion through social media and entrepreneurial growth can be seen here. Promotion is crucial for any business, and social media can implement all the tools efficiently. Whether it is sales promotion or advertising or other public relations tools, social media make them more manageable and less expensive to boost the promotional activities and achieve the promotional goals.

CONCLUSION

The Government should arrange training programs about social media to encourage Female Entrepreneurship. Though it's in the pipeline for Punjab, this can also be planned for

Sindh. While doing the study, it has been found that there is no standard performance indicator of these businesses being operated online through social media, which means that it is difficult to assess how these female entrepreneurs perform precisely. Hence, further research could be done to evaluate their performances. The variables CRM, Promotion and Work-life balance has a positive relationship with the growth of female entrepreneurship while the relation between Cost Efficiency and female entrepreneurship cannot be seen.

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