

EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A BUSINESS PLATFORM: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO THOOTHUKUDI**Dr. E. Esakkiammal**

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Abstract

The rapid growth of social media has significantly transformed the way businesses operate, particularly for small and emerging entrepreneurs. This study examines the effectiveness of social media as a business platform with special reference to Thoothukudi. It aims to analyze the perception and attitude of entrepreneurs towards social media business, the benefits derived, the effectiveness of promotional activities, and the preferred modes of payment for earning higher profits. The study is based on primary data collected from 120 social media entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire and secondary data from journals, articles, and websites. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, t-test, chi-square test, ANOVA, and Likert's scale were employed for data analysis. The findings reveal that young and professionally qualified entrepreneurs are more inclined towards adopting social media for business. A significant relationship was found between profession and type of ownership, as well as between gender and the choice of social media platforms for entrepreneurial activities. However, no significant relationship was observed between age and preference for advertisement formats. The study concludes that social media serves as an effective and economical business platform that enhances market reach, customer engagement, and income generation, thereby playing a vital role in promoting entrepreneurship in Thoothukudi.

Key Words - Social Media, Entrepreneurship, Business Platform, Promotional Activities, Thoothukudi, Digital Marketing, Small Businesses, Consumer Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Online social media has recently become an important marketing communication tool around the globe. Consequently, connecting through social networks has become an integral part of the daily lives of many consumers in the USA and worldwide. In general, social media may be considered as, "a platform that facilitates information sharing and participation from users of the media in order to create and/or distribute the content". Differing from traditional marketing communication media, social media offers high levels of interaction, collaboration, targeting and engagement, hence creating significant marketing opportunities for entrepreneurs to target and communicate with their consumers more effectively. Practitioners and researchers agree that social media offers important marketing capabilities to businesses, especially entrepreneurial small businesses, in their efforts to reach target customers, develop and maintain relationships with customers, improve business processes through efficient communication networks and reduce media expenses. However, little is known about the entrepreneurial usage of social media to connect with customers in developing countries, where the social media usage has been growing rapidly.

Entrepreneurial opportunities are important for entrepreneurs looking to start a business because business creation is a process of identifying and exploiting potential opportunities. Thus, identifying and capturing opportunities is fundamental to the entrepreneurship process. However, this process is often challenging for entrepreneurs as they try to create their own businesses and increase financial performance. Many researchers have explored when and how entrepreneurs recognize and exploit opportunity using available resources. The ability to succeed has been explained in various different ways, ranging from individual differences to sustainable entrepreneurship.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Eunice Mukolwe and Dr. Jacqueline Korir [2016] focused social media and entrepreneurship: tools, benefits and challenges. A case study of women entrepreneurs on Kilimani Mums Marketplaces on Facebook. The researcher investigated business owners and marketers in understanding how social media works as a communication tool and how they grow their business by implementing a social media strategy. In Kenya, there is a growing trend by women entrepreneurs to open business through online platforms. Hence he evaluates how social media can boost women entrepreneurship by looking at benefits, challenges and how social media strategy can be implemented. HE concludes as there is majority of the small business owners on Kilimani Mums Marketplace have not embraced other social media tools apart from Facebook for their business. Successfully using social media takes time and patience. Entrepreneurs on Kilimani Mums Marketplace should consistently listen, measure and learn, then adjust their social media strategy on the basis of what's working best for the business. Mahwish Zafar, Shazia Kousar, Nadia Nasir [2017] stated their article on impact of social media on entrepreneurship growth. They focused on the difference between entrepreneurship's growth on the basis of those who are using social media for the promotion of products and services and for those who are not using. They resulted that the Lahore companies who are on social media are more popular among the masses as compare to those who are not using internet for the advertising purposes.

Madhohi Hossain, Mayeesha Fairuz Rahman [2018] investigated on social media and the creation of Entrepreneurial Opportunity for women. The study aims in focusing the factors that have influenced women to take up their businesses to social media, and how these in return have opened doors of entrepreneurial opportunity for them. They defined their study as the benefit of running a business on social media has definitely contributed to Women Entrepreneurship. However, these two factors product and development, and promotion, do not have significant relationship with entrepreneurial opportunity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social media is a real possibility for entrepreneurs to grow significantly in the business environment with the advancement of technologies, entrepreneurs have the ability to increase social contacts, hasten business operations, the betterment of customer relations, facilitation of innovation and favourable pricing and advantages recruitment of highly competent staff. Social media is one of the mechanisms needed for research to understand the growth of the business in Thoothukudi. With the global outpouring of social media usage, many businesses are experiencing tremendous pressure to extend where their customers are paying attention. In the present days, the hearts of the customers activity is progressively becoming virtual, situated inside a social media or social networking sites. From 2015, social media has a rapid effect on the growth of sales and employment rate in the enterprise. The study insists how social media are able to transform and grow them in terms of usage as marketing and communication tools and how they can tap into the dynamism and potential social media presents.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To study the perception and attitude of using social media business.
- ✓ To study the benefits derived while using social media for doing business.
- ✓ To analyse the effectiveness of promotional activities carried out in social media business.
- ✓ To examine the mode of payment in which social media entrepreneurs earn more profit. based on above objective related topic

AREA OF THE STUDY.

The study has been conducted among entrepreneurs who use social media for businesses in thoothukudi.

SOURCE OF THE STUDY

The primary data was collected from the entrepreneurs of Thoothukudi about the perception, attitude, benefits, and intention of using social media networks through questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from articles, journals and from various websites.

SAMPLE SIZE

Sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations to include in statistical sample. The sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inference about a population from a sample. A random of 120 customers were selected for the purpose of eliciting information.

SAMPLING DESIGN

The sample technique used in the study is convenience sampling method. In this study 120 respondents were selected and their responses were collected using structured questionnaire.

METHODOLOGY

The collected information is placed in a logical sequence to study about the satisfaction of social media entrepreneurs in Thoothukudi. The results were derived with the help of statistical method of collection, compilation and analysis.

STATISTICAL TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The collected data were analyzed by using excel and spss and also manually. Statistical tools like percentage analysis, t-test, chi-square test, ANOVA, Likert's scaling techniques.

Analysis and interpretation

Particulars	No. of respondents		Percentage
	Age (in years)		
18-30	43		35.83
31-42	26		21.67
43-55	41		34.17
More than 55	10		8.33
Gender			
Male	88		73.3
Female	32		26.7
Marital status			
Married	53		44.2
Unmarried	63		52.5
Separated	4		3.3
Educational qualification			
Illiterate	11		9.2
SSLC or below	25		20.8
HSC	14		11.7
UG graduate	22		18.3
PG graduate	1		0.8
Professional degree	47		39.2
Profession			
Beautician	16		13.3
Tailors	23		19.2
Textile	21		17.5
Make over artists	7		5.8
Organic product seller	11		9.2
Doctors	3		2.5
Teachers	9		7.5
Engineers	4		3.3
Others	26		21.7
Monthly income			
Less than 50000	47		39.2
50000-99999	32		26.7
100000-149999	29		24.1
More than 150000	12		10
Total	120		100

Source : Primary Data

Interpretation: The socio-economic profile of the social media entrepreneurs reveals important insights into their background and business involvement. The majority of the entrepreneurs (35.83%) belong to the age group of 18 to 30 years, indicating that young individuals are more inclined towards adopting social media business due to their eagerness to learn, technological adaptability, and willingness to take risks, while males dominate the sector with 73.3%, showing higher participation compared to females. Most of the entrepreneurs are unmarried (52.5%), suggesting greater flexibility and freedom to focus on entrepreneurial activities. In terms of education, a significant proportion (39.2%) are professional degree holders, reflecting that higher educational attainment enhances understanding and effective utilization of social media for business purposes. Regarding profession, a majority are engaged in other job categories such as restaurants, designers, and legal services, followed by tailors and textile-related activities, highlighting the diverse occupational background of social media entrepreneurs. With respect to income, most respondents (39.2%) earn below Rs. 50,000 per month, while a considerable proportion earn above this level, indicating that social media entrepreneurship provides a viable source of income and has the potential to improve the socio-economic status of individuals.

PROFESSION AND TYPE OF OWNERSHIP IN THE BUSINESS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between profession of the respondent and the type of ownership he / she owns.

Chi square test on profession and the type of ownership

Factor	Critical Value	DF	. Sig. value
Pearson Chi-Square	294.539 ^a	32	*0.000

a. 5 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than

*Significant at 5% level

The association between the profession of the respondent and the ownership right that he / she possesses. It is found that $p=0.000$ ($p<0.05$), and so the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant relationship between profession of respondent and the ownership right of the entrepreneurs.

GENDER AND GOOD CHOICE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between gender and choice of social media for business activities.

Independent sample t-test for gender and choice of social media for entrepreneurial activities

Particulars	Gender Wise	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
	Female	32	2.0000	.00000		
What's app	Male	88	1.7614	.42869	-5.222	0.000
	Female	32	2.0000	.00000		
Instagram	Male	88	1.0000	.00000	-21.564	0.000
	Female	32	1.9375	.24593		
Twitter	Male	88	1.8182	.38790	-7.750	0.000
	Female	32	3.0625	.87759		
LinkedIn	Male	88	2.0568	.38231	-23.143	0.000
	Female	32	3.0000	.00000		
You tube	Male	88	1.0000	.00000	-4.910	0.000
	Female	32	1.4375	.50402		
blogging	Male	88	1.7273	.44791	-5.719	0.000
	Female	32	2.4063	.61484		
Mobile text	Male	88	2.1250	.33261	-10.242	0.000
	Female	32	4.0000	1.01600		
My space	Male	88	2.8523	.35686	-12.650	0.000
	Female	32	3.8125	.39656		

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that ‘p-value’ 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence as a whole, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between gender and choice of social media is good for business activities. Based on it, mean score of female respondents is more than male. Hence female is more interested in doing social media business in order to save time and money within a short period.

AGE AND PREFERENCE OF ADVERTISEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Null hypothesis:H₀: There is no significant relationship between age and preference of advertisements in social media.

Table showing one way ANOVA for age and preference of advertisement in social media

Source of variation		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Txt	Between Groups	.382	3	.127	.082	.970
	Within Groups	181.084	116	1.561		
	Total	181.467	119			
Images	Between Groups	.549	3	.183	.245	.865
	Within Groups	86.617	116	.747		
	Total	87.167	119			
Videos	Between Groups	.010	3	.003	.004	1.000
	Within Groups	110.356	116	.951		
	Total	110.367	119			
Gifs	Between Groups	.004	3	.001	.003	1.000
	Within Groups	52.363	116	.451		
	Total	52.367	119			
catalogues	Between Groups	.031	3	.010	.006	.999
	Within Groups	193.269	116	1.666		
	Total	193.300	119			

*significant at 5% level

The one way ANOVA that explores the relationship between age and preference of advertisements in social media. There is no statistically significant difference between groups as disclosed by the value of F=0.082 where the p value is 0.970 (p>0.05) and this indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between age and preferring text as more effective form of advertisements. There is no statistically significant difference between groups as disclosed by the value of F=0.245 where the p value is 0.865 (p>0.05) and this indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between age and preferring images as more effective form of advertisements. There is no statistically significant difference between groups as disclosed by the value of F=0.004 where the p value is 1.000 (p>0.05) and this indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between age and preferring videos as more effective form of advertisements. There is no statistically significant difference between groups as disclosed by the value of F=0.003 where the p value is 1.000 (p>0.05) and this indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between age and preferring GIFs as more effective form of advertisements. There is no statistically significant difference between groups as disclosed by the value of F=0.006 where the p value is 0.999 (p>0.05) and this indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between age and preferring catalogues as more effective form of advertisements.

CONCLUSION

The present study on the effectiveness of social media as a business platform with special reference to Thoothukudi reveals that social media has emerged as a powerful and viable tool for entrepreneurial development. The findings show that a majority of social media entrepreneurs are young, male, unmarried, and professionally qualified, indicating that educated youth are more inclined towards adopting social media for business due to their technological adaptability and innovative mindset. The diverse occupational background of respondents, particularly in tailoring, textiles, beautician services, and other service-oriented activities, highlights the wide applicability of social media across different sectors.

The statistical analysis confirms a significant relationship between the profession of the respondents and the type of ownership in business, suggesting that the nature of one’s profession strongly influences entrepreneurial control and decision-making. Further, the study establishes a significant relationship between gender and the choice of social media platforms for entrepreneurial activities, with female entrepreneurs showing higher mean scores, indicating greater interest and effective use of social media for saving time and cost. However, the analysis also reveals that there is no significant relationship between age and preference for different types of advertisements such as text, images, videos, GIFs, and catalogues, implying that entrepreneurs across age groups perceive all forms of social media advertisements as equally effective.

Overall, the study concludes that social media is an effective business platform that enhances promotional activities, facilitates better customer reach, and improves income-generating opportunities for entrepreneurs in Thoothukudi. It not only supports business growth at low cost but also encourages inclusive participation, especially among women and young entrepreneurs. Hence, social media can be considered a catalyst for entrepreneurial success and sustainable business development in the modern digital era.

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