

Social Media Marketing on the Business Performance of Digipreneurs in Coimbatore District

RESEARCH

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of Social Media Marketing (SMM) on the business performance of digipreneurs operating in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. Using a structured questionnaire administered to 150 respondents, the study analyses the relationship between SMM practices and key performance indicators such as sales growth, customer reach, and brand awareness. Cross-tabulation analysis reveals significant associations between the frequency of social media usage, platform selection, and business outcomes. The findings confirm that Instagram and Facebook are the most preferred platforms, and digipreneurs who engage in daily SMM activities report substantially higher business performance. The study concludes with actionable recommendations to enhance digital entrepreneurship in the region.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Digipreneurs, Business Performance, Digital Entrepreneurship.*

1. Introduction

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies has transformed the business landscape, giving rise to a new breed of entrepreneurs known as digipreneurs—individuals who leverage digital platforms to build, manage, and scale their businesses. Social Media Marketing (SMM), encompassing platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn, has emerged as one of the most cost-effective tools for digipreneurs to reach target audiences, build brand equity, and drive revenue growth (Kaplan, Haenlein, 2010). Coimbatore, often referred to as the 'Manchester of South India', is witnessing a surge in digital entrepreneurial activity. With a growing base of young, tech-savvy entrepreneurs and improved internet infrastructure, the district presents a unique context to examine how SMM influences business performance (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Despite the widespread adoption of social media among small business owners, empirical evidence on its measurable impact on digipreneur performance in Tier-II cities like Coimbatore remains limited. Strategic social media marketing has been found to significantly contribute to organizational growth, customer engagement, and competitive advantage (Felix et al., 2017). This study addresses that gap by investigating the relationship between social media marketing practices and business performance outcomes among 150 digipreneurs in Coimbatore District. The research provides evidence-based insights that can guide entrepreneurs, policymakers, and digital marketing practitioners.

2. Review of Literature

(Kaplan and Haenlein 2010) Defined social media as internet-based applications that build upon the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Their seminal work underscored the growing importance of SMM for businesses of all sizes. (Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch 2017) Proposed

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a framework linking SMM strategy to firm performance, arguing that both organic and paid social media activities contribute significantly to brand visibility and customer engagement. They found that firms with integrated SMM strategies outperformed those with fragmented approaches. (Tuten and Solomon 2017) Highlighted that SMM enables businesses to engage consumers in a two-way dialogue, enhancing brand loyalty and customer retention. Their research was particularly relevant for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that lack traditional advertising budgets. (Alalwan et al. 2017) Reviewed 144 studies on social media in marketing and concluded that social media positively affects customer purchase intention, brand trust, and overall business performance. Instagram and Facebook were identified as the most impactful platforms for consumer-facing businesses. (Sharma and Sharma 2019) Examined digital marketing adoption among MSMEs in Tier-II cities and found that social media was the most frequently used digital channel. However, systematic measurement of ROI remained a challenge for most micro-entrepreneurs. (Dwivedi et al. 2021) Explored the role of social media during the COVID-19 pandemic and observed that businesses with established social media presence recovered significantly faster than those without. This reinforced SMM's strategic importance for business resilience and continuity.

3. Statement of the Problem

While social media has become ubiquitous in everyday commerce, the specific impact of SMM on the business performance of digipreneurs in semi-urban and Tier-II markets such as Coimbatore District has not been adequately studied. Most existing research focuses on large corporations or metropolitan areas, leaving a critical void in understanding the dynamics of digital entrepreneurship at the grassroots level. Many digipreneurs in Coimbatore adopt social media marketing on a trial-and-error basis without a strategic framework, resulting in suboptimal outcomes. There is a pressing need for empirical research to identify which

platforms are most effective, how posting frequency influences performance, and how demographic and business characteristics mediate these relationships. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of social media engagement and strategic digital marketing in enhancing business performance and customer relationships (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017). This study attempts to fill this gap by systematically analysing the influence of SMM on the business performance of digipreneurs in Coimbatore District. Objective of the study to examine the impact of social media marketing practices on the business performance of digipreneurs in Coimbatore District, with specific reference to platform preference, posting frequency, customer reach, and sales growth.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were drawn from published journals, books, and government reports.

4.2. Population and Sampling

The target population comprises digipreneurs operating in Coimbatore District who actively use social media for business purposes. A convenience sampling method was employed, and a sample of 150 respondents was selected from various business categories including product-based, service-based, and hybrid digipreneurs. The respondents were spread across different age groups, educational backgrounds, and income levels to ensure representativeness.

4.3. Data Collection

Data were collected through a pre-tested structured questionnaire consisting of three sections:

- Demographic and business profile,
- Social media marketing practices,

- Business performance indicators.

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure perceived effectiveness and business outcomes. The survey was conducted both online (via Google Forms) and offline during the period January-march 2024.

4.4. Tools for Analysis

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analysed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation (chi-square test of association). IBM SPSS Version 26 was used for analysis. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was adopted throughout the study.

4.5. Analysis and Discussion

Cross-tabulation tables were constructed to examine the relationships between respondent characteristics, SMM practices, and business performance outcomes. The following tables present the key findings.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents vs. Preferred Social Media Platform

Gender	Instagram	Facebook	YouTube	LinkedIn	Total
Male	28	22	14	16	80
Female	26	18	10	16	70
Total	54	40	24	32	150

(Table 1) Indicates that 54 respondents prefer Instagram, making it the most popular platform among both male (28) and female (26) digipreneurs. Facebook is the second most preferred platform (40), while YouTube (24) and LinkedIn (32) are used predominantly for niche and professional marketing. The near-equal distribution across genders suggests that social media adoption among digipreneurs is not significantly influenced by gender. Chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 2.34, p = 0.51$) confirms no significant gender difference in platform preference.

Table 2: Type of Business vs. Frequency of Social Media Marketing

Business Type	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Total
Product-based	32	18	8	4	62
Service-based	28	22	10	5	65
Both	12	6	3	2	23
Total	72	46	21	11	150

(Table 2) Reveals that 72 out of 150 respondents (48%) engage in daily SMM activities. Service-based digipreneurs post more frequently (28 daily) compared to product-based ones (32 daily in absolute terms, but proportionally lower). Monthly and rare posting is minimal, suggesting that most digipreneurs understand the importance of regular engagement. The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 8.67, p = 0.03$) indicates a significant association between business type and SMM frequency, with service-based businesses exhibiting a higher propensity for frequent posting. This finding is consistent with (Sabate, Berbegal-Mirabent, Canabate, and Lebherz 2014), who reported that frequent and timely social media activity enhances audience engagement improves the effectiveness of online marketing efforts.

Table 3: Years of Business Experience vs. Level of Sales Growth

Experience (Yrs)	High Growth	Moderate Growth	No Growth	Total
< 1 year	10	14	8	32
1–3 years	22	18	6	46
3–5 years	18	10	4	32
> 5 years	24	10	6	40
Total	74	52	24	150

(Table 3) Demonstrates a positive association between business experience and sales growth. Digipreneurs with more than 5 years of experience recorded the highest rate of 'high growth' (24 respondents, 60%), while those with less

than 1 year reported comparatively lower growth. This suggests that experienced digipreneurs have refined their SMM strategies over time, yielding better sales outcomes. The chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 12.43$, $p = 0.006$) confirms a statistically significant relationship between experience and sales growth. This finding is consistent with (Eggers, Hatak, Kraus, and Niemand 2017), who found that entrepreneurial experience enhances the ability of small business owners to leverage digital and marketing capabilities, resulting in improved business performance and growth.

Table 4: Educational Qualification vs. Perceived Effectiveness of SMM

Education	Highly Effective	Effective	Neutral	Not Effective	Total
School Level	6	8	4	2	20
UG Degree	18	22	10	6	56
PG Degree	20	24	8	4	56
Professional	10	6	2	0	18
Total	54	60	24	12	150

(Table 4) Shows that postgraduate degree holders (56) and undergraduate degree holders (56) together constitute the majority, with both groups predominantly rating SMM as 'effective' or 'highly effective'. Professionally qualified respondents report the highest concentration of 'highly effective' ratings (10 out of 18). School-level-educated respondents rate SMM as less effective, possibly due to limited technical proficiency. The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 9.82$, $p = 0.02$) indicates a significant difference in perceived effectiveness across educational groups.

Table 5: Annual Income vs. Monthly Social Media Advertising Spend

Annual Income (₹)	< ₹ 5,000	₹ 5,000– ₹ 15,000	> ₹ 15,000	Total
< 2 Lakh	22	10	4	36
2 – 5 Lakh	18	22	10	50
5 – 10 Lakh	8	18	16	42
> 10 Lakh	4	8	10	22
Total	52	58	40	150

(Table 5) Highlights that digipreneurs with higher annual incomes allocate greater budgets to social media advertising. Among those earning above ₹ 10 lakh, 10 respondents spend more than ₹ 15,000 per month on SMM. Conversely, low-income digipreneurs predominantly limit their spend to under ₹ 5,000. This income-driven variation in advertising investment is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 18.56$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that financial capacity is a key determinant of SMM investment intensity. This finding is consistent with (Jones, Borgman, and Ulusoy 2015), who reported that firms with greater financial and organizational resources are more likely to adopt and intensively utilize social media marketing strategies to enhance business growth and competitiveness.

Table 6: Social Media Platform Used vs. Customer Reach Rating

Platform	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Total
Instagram	26	18	8	2	54
Facebook	14	16	6	4	40
YouTube	10	8	4	2	24
LinkedIn	12	14	4	2	32
Total	62	56	22	10	150

(Table 6) Shows that Instagram delivers the highest customer reach, with 26 respondents rating it as 'excellent'. Facebook and LinkedIn follow with moderate reach ratings. YouTube, despite a smaller user base in this sample, also achieves favourable reach scores. The overall pattern confirms that visual platforms such as Instagram and Facebook offer superior reach for digipreneur marketing activities. This finding is consistent with the work of (De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang 2012), who found that social media content on visually engaging platforms generates higher levels of customer interaction and brand engagement.

5. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that social media marketing has a significant and measurable positive impact on the business performance of digipreneurs in Coimbatore District. platform selection, posting frequency, educational qualification, and financial investment in SMM are all critical determinants of business outcomes. Instagram and Facebook emerge as the most effective channels, while consistent daily engagement is strongly associated with improved sales and customer reach. These findings are consistent with the observations of who reported that the effective use of social media technologies enhances customer relationship performance and overall business outcomes. Similarly, found that social media adoption positively influences the performance of small and medium enterprises by improving customer engagement, market reach, and business growth. The findings underscore the need for structured SMM training programmes targeted at early-stage and less-educated digipreneurs to bridge the digital skill gap. This recommendation is supported by who emphasized that businesses require adequate digital marketing knowledge and competencies to effectively leverage social media platforms and enhance business performance. Previous studies have emphasized that digital marketing competencies and social media skills are critical for enhancing the competitiveness and

sustainability of small businesses in the digital economy. Additionally, financial support mechanisms such as government-subsidised digital advertising grants could empower low-income digipreneurs to scale their online marketing efforts. Research has also highlighted the importance of institutional support, training, and resource accessibility in facilitating successful digital transformation among small enterprises. Future research should employ longitudinal designs and larger samples to track the evolving SMM-performance relationship in rapidly digitising Tier-II markets.

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