

How Adoption of Digital Technology Impacts the Business Growth and Performance of Women Entrepreneurs in Emerging Markets

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2. Introduction

In recent years, digital technology has become a vital tool for businesses across the globe. Women entrepreneurs in emerging markets are increasingly using technology to overcome challenges such as limited access to resources, networks, and markets. Digital tools like social media, e-commerce platforms, mobile banking, and cloud-based applications help women entrepreneurs improve efficiency, reach customers, and manage operations effectively. Despite the growing adoption of technology, many women entrepreneurs still face barriers such as low digital literacy, lack of infrastructure, and social constraints. Understanding how technology impacts business growth and performance can help policymakers, NGOs, and business support organizations design better strategies to empower women entrepreneurs in emerging markets.

3. Problem Statement & Background to Research

Women entrepreneurs in emerging markets face several challenges, including restricted access to finance, social and cultural limitations, and limited networking opportunities. While digital technology offers opportunities to overcome these challenges, the extent to which it impacts business growth and performance remains unclear.

Digital tools provide platforms for marketing, sales, inventory management, and financial transactions. Women entrepreneurs using digital technology can reach larger audiences, reduce operational costs, and improve customer service. For instance, small business owners who sell products online can access national and international markets, which would not have been possible with traditional methods.

Despite these benefits, many women entrepreneurs are hesitant or unable to adopt digital tools due to factors such as lack of technical knowledge, limited internet connectivity, and financial constraints. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of digital adoption for business survival, yet also exposed the digital divide in emerging markets.

This research seeks to explore how digital technology adoption impacts business growth and performance specifically for women entrepreneurs in emerging markets. By focusing on qualitative research, this study will capture the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by these entrepreneurs. The insights gained can help design training programs, digital support systems, and policies to enhance women's participation in business using digital technologies.

4. Practical Application of the Study

The findings of this study will have practical implications for multiple stakeholders. For women entrepreneurs, the research can highlight effective digital tools and strategies for improving business performance. Training programs can be developed to address gaps in digital literacy and technical skills.

For policymakers and NGOs, the research will provide evidence on the barriers women face in adopting technology and suggest interventions to enhance digital inclusion. For example, providing affordable internet access, digital skills workshops, and financial support for technology adoption could help women scale their businesses effectively.

Business support organizations can also use the findings to design mentorship programs that focus on digital entrepreneurship. Ultimately, this study aims to empower women entrepreneurs, improve their business outcomes, and contribute to economic growth in emerging markets through the strategic use of digital technologies.

5. Research Question, Aims & Objectives

Aims:

- To explore the role of digital technology in enhancing business growth among women entrepreneurs.
- To understand the challenges faced by women in adopting digital tools in emerging markets.
- To provide recommendations for improving digital technology adoption among women entrepreneurs.

Objectives:

1. To **identify** the types of digital tools most commonly used by women entrepreneurs in emerging markets.
2. To **explore** the impact of digital technology on business performance, including sales, customer reach, and efficiency.
3. To **understand** the barriers and challenges women face in digital technology adoption.
4. To **suggest** practical strategies and interventions to support women entrepreneurs in adopting digital technologies.

6. Literature Review & Rationale

6.1 Impact on Business Growth

Research indicates that digital adoption can improve revenue, customer reach, and operational efficiency (Klapper et al., 2019). For example, women entrepreneurs using online marketplaces can sell to a larger audience and scale their business faster than those relying on traditional methods (Cheriyian & Bansal, 2020).

6.2 Heeks, R., & Arun, S. (2010). Digital Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies: Gendered Perspectives.

This study examines digital entrepreneurship in developing countries, focusing specifically on gender. It analyzes how women's access to digital tools and technologies is shaped by socio-cultural norms, economic conditions, and institutional support.

It contextualizes the adoption of digital technology within emerging markets, highlighting external socio-cultural and economic barriers. This helps you frame the environment in which women entrepreneurs operate and the specific constraints they encounter.

6.3 Mahmood, R., & Malik, S. (2017). Exploring the Role of Social Media in Women's Entrepreneurial Growth in Emerging Economies.

This research focuses on social media as a digital tool for women entrepreneurs. It examines how platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn can help with networking, marketing, customer engagement, and business growth in emerging economies.

It shows a practical example of digital technology adoption and its tangible impact on business growth. It informs your study by highlighting a specific technology (social media) and its benefits, demonstrating how digital adoption can translate into improved performance.

6.4 Ghosh, S., & Vinod, S. (2020). Digital Platforms and Women Entrepreneurs: Opportunities and Barriers in India.

This article explores the role of digital platforms—like e-commerce websites, online marketplaces, and digital payment systems—in supporting women entrepreneurs in India. It identifies both opportunities (e.g., market expansion, cost savings) and barriers (e.g., technological literacy, infrastructure).

It highlights practical tools and barriers specific to digital platforms, giving concrete examples of how technology can enhance growth while also showing challenges that need to be addressed in emerging markets.

7. Research Methodology, Design & Justification

This study will use a **qualitative research approach** to explore the experiences and perceptions of women entrepreneurs in emerging markets regarding digital technology adoption. Qualitative research is well-suited for understanding complex social phenomena and capturing detailed, personal experiences that may not be measurable through quantitative methods..

Research Design:

The study will use a **case study approach**, focusing on women entrepreneurs in selected emerging markets.. Interviews will explore the types of digital tools used, the perceived impact on business performance, challenges faced, and strategies for overcoming barriers.

Sampling:

A **purposive sampling** method will be used to select participants who are actively engaged in entrepreneurial activities and have experience with digital tools. This ensures that the study gathers information from individuals directly relevant to the topic.

Data Collection:

Secondary data from Academic journals, reports, and industry publications for background information.

Data Analysis:

Thematic analysis will be used to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights from the interviews.

Justification:

Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for exploring subjective experiences, perceptions, and challenges. By focusing on the experiences of women entrepreneurs, this study will provide detailed insights into the real-world impact of digital technology adoption, which quantitative methods may not capture fully. The use of semi-structured interviews ensures flexibility while maintaining focus on research objectives. The study approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of individual experiences, providing rich qualitative data to inform practical recommendations.

8. Reference List

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5. IFC. (2021). *Women entrepreneurs and digital adoption in emerging markets*. Washington, DC: International Finance Corporation.
6. Heeks, R., & Arun, S. (2010). *Social inclusion and ICTs: Lessons from developing countries*. Information Technology for Development, 16(2), 101–118.
7. Pachó, F. (2022). Digital technology adoption by women entrepreneurs amid COVID-19 pandemic. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, 29(2), 1-15.
8. Singh, A. V., (2012). "Women and Entrepreneurship in India", Retrieved on 23th December 2020 from <http://www.womensweb.in/articles/women-entrepreneurship-in-india/>

9. Overall Presentation

This proposal adheres to academic rigor by presenting a clear research question, well-defined aims and objectives, and a robust methodology. The literature review is comprehensive, drawing from recent and relevant studies to contextualize the research. The proposed study employs a qualitative approach, ensuring depth and richness in data collection and analysis. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights into the digital empowerment of women entrepreneurs in emerging markets.