

Role Of social media In Brand Positioning and Market Visibility of Women-Led MSMEs

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Abstract—Women-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in inclusive economic development; however, these enterprises often face persistent challenges related to brand positioning and market visibility. Limited financial resources, restricted access to traditional marketing channels, and lack of structured branding strategies significantly affect their competitive presence in the market. In this context, social media has emerged as a cost-effective and accessible platform for brand communication and customer engagement.

The present study aims to examine the role of social media in enhancing brand visibility of women-led MSMEs and to identify the challenges that limit its effective use for brand positioning. The study adopts a descriptive research design and is based on primary data collected from 120 women entrepreneurs using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. A 5-point Likert scale was used, and data was analyzed using percentage analysis and tabular representation in MS Excel.

The findings reveal that over 75% of respondents perceive social media as an effective tool for improving brand visibility and entrepreneurial confidence. However, challenges such as lack of digital marketing skills, time constraints, and inconsistent content strategies hinder optimal brand positioning. The study concludes that while social media offers significant branding opportunities for women-led MSMEs, structured strategies and skill development are essential for sustainable market visibility.

Index Terms—Women entrepreneurship, brand positioning, social media marketing, market visibility, MSMEs

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Women entrepreneurship has gained significant importance in recent years, particularly in the MSME sector, which contributes substantially to employment generation and economic growth. Despite increased participation, women-led MSMEs continue to face several structural and operational challenges, especially in the areas of branding, market visibility, and customer outreach. Limited access to capital and professional marketing support restricts their ability to compete with established brands.

Traditional marketing methods such as print advertising, trade fairs, and television promotions require substantial financial investment, making them less feasible for small enterprises. As a result, many women entrepreneurs struggle to create strong brand identities and maintain consistent market presence.

1.2 ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BRANDING

The rapid growth of digital platforms has transformed marketing practices across industries. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp enable businesses to promote products, interact with customers, and build brand identity at relatively low cost. These platforms allow direct communication with customers, instant feedback, and wider market reach beyond geographical limitations. For women entrepreneurs, social media offers flexibility and accessibility, enabling them to manage branding activities alongside personal and professional responsibilities. However, effective utilization of social media for brand positioning

requires digital skills, content consistency, and strategic planning.

1.3 NEED FOR THE STUDY

Although social media adoption among women-led MSMEs is increasing, there is limited empirical research focusing on its impact on brand visibility and positioning. Many studies emphasize marketing outcomes such as sales and engagement but overlook perception-based factors like confidence and brand communication consistency. This study attempts to address this gap by quantitatively analyzing how social media contributes to brand visibility and identifying challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Women entrepreneurship has been widely discussed in academic literature, particularly in relation to economic development and inclusive growth. However, studies consistently highlight that women entrepreneurs face structural barriers that restrict business growth and brand development. Brush and Cooper (2012) emphasize that limited access to financial resources, professional networks, and marketing expertise significantly affects the ability of women entrepreneurs to establish strong brand identities and achieve market visibility. These challenges are especially pronounced in micro and small enterprises, where formal branding strategies are often absent.

Research further suggests that women-led enterprises rely heavily on informal marketing practices due to resource constraints. Renzulli, Aldrich, and Moody (2000) argue that limited access to professional networks reduces exposure to market opportunities, resulting in weaker brand positioning and reduced competitive advantage. Consequently, many women-led MSMEs struggle to build brand recognition despite offering quality products or services.

The emergence of digital platforms has transformed marketing practices for small businesses. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as internet-based applications that facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content, enabling direct interaction between businesses and consumers. For MSMEs, social media provides a cost-effective alternative to traditional marketing channels, allowing entrepreneurs

to promote their brands, engage customers, and expand market reach without substantial financial investment.

From a branding perspective, digital platforms support consistent brand communication and customer engagement. Kotler and Keller (2016) highlight that social media enables storytelling, relationship building, and personalization, which are essential for effective brand positioning. These features are particularly valuable for women-led MSMEs as they help overcome budgetary constraints and improve market visibility.

Social media also contributes to the development of social capital. Putnam (2000) emphasizes that networks and relationships serve as critical resources for entrepreneurial success. Digital platforms allow women entrepreneurs to expand their networks beyond geographical limitations, thereby enhancing brand recognition and customer trust.

Despite these advantages, challenges related to digital adoption persist. Norris (2001) discusses the digital divide, which highlights disparities in access to technology and digital skills. Women entrepreneurs with limited digital literacy often struggle to use social media strategically, resulting in inconsistent content and weak brand positioning. Additionally, Statista (2023) reports that although social media adoption among MSMEs is increasing, many businesses lack clear branding objectives, reducing the overall effectiveness of digital platforms for market visibility. Although existing literature provides insights into women entrepreneurship and digital marketing, limited empirical studies focus on the quantitative relationship between social media usage, brand visibility, and entrepreneurial confidence among women-led MSMEs. This study addresses this gap by examining how social media influences brand positioning and identifying challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

III. RESEARCH GAP & OBJECTIVES

3.1 RESEARCH GAP

Existing literature provides valuable insights into women entrepreneurship and the growing role of social media in business marketing. Prior studies have primarily focused on broad outcomes such as digital adoption, customer engagement, and sales performance. However, limited attention has been

given to understanding how social media specifically contributes to brand visibility and brand positioning among women-led MSMEs.

Moreover, most studies emphasize qualitative discussions or generalized marketing outcomes, with relatively fewer empirical investigations examining perception-based dimensions such as entrepreneurial confidence and branding challenges in a structured quantitative manner. There is also a lack of focused studies that examine these aspects within the context of women-led MSMEs operating with limited resources.

Therefore, a research gap exists in empirically examining the relationship between social media usage, brand visibility, entrepreneurial confidence, and perceived branding challenges among women-led MSMEs. The present study seeks to address this gap by providing quantitative evidence based on primary data collected from women entrepreneurs.

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the role of social media in enhancing brand visibility of women-led MSMEs
2. To analyze the impact of social media on entrepreneurial confidence and brand communication
3. To identify challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in using social media for brand positioning
4. To suggest strategies to enhance market visibility through social media

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design, data collection methods, sampling framework, measurement tools, and analytical techniques employed to examine the role of social media in brand positioning and market visibility of women-led MSMEs. The methodology has been designed to ensure clarity, reliability, and relevance of findings while remaining appropriate for MBA-level empirical research.

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study follows a descriptive research design, as it aims to describe and analyze existing perceptions, practices, and challenges faced by women

entrepreneurs in using social media for branding. A quantitative approach was adopted to enable numerical analysis and objective interpretation of responses. The study does not attempt to establish cause-and-effect relationships but focuses on identifying patterns and trends.

4.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study includes women entrepreneurs managing MSMEs who actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp for business promotion. A sample of 120 respondents was selected using the convenience sampling technique due to time constraints and ease of access. The sample size is considered appropriate for descriptive analysis and provides meaningful insights into branding practices among women-led enterprises.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms, allowing respondents to complete the survey remotely and conveniently. The questionnaire consisted of multiple Likert-scale statements aimed at capturing respondents' perceptions regarding:

- Impact of social media on brand visibility
- Influence of social media on entrepreneurial confidence
- Challenges faced in using social media for branding
- Overall perception of social media as a business tool

The online mode of data collection ensured wider reach, reduced response time, and minimized data entry errors.

SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION

Secondary data was collected from academic journals, research articles, government reports on MSMEs, and published studies related to women entrepreneurship, social media marketing, and brand positioning. Secondary sources were used to support the theoretical framework and contextualize the findings of the study.

4.4 MEASUREMENT SCALE

The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale to measure respondents' level of agreement with various statements.

The scale ranged from:

1. StronglyDisagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

The Likert scale was chosen due to its simplicity, ease of understanding, and suitability for measuring attitudes and perceptions in social science research.

4.5 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was coded, tabulated, and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The following analytical techniques were employed:

- Percentage analysis to summarize response patterns
- Frequency distribution to understand response trends
- Tabular representation for clarity and comparison

- Graphical representation (bar charts and pie charts) to enhance interpretation

These tools were deemed sufficient for achieving the research objectives at an MBA level and ensured transparent and understandable analysis.

4.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

Despite careful design, the methodology has certain limitations:

- The study is based on self-reported perceptions, which may involve subjective bias
- Convenience sampling limits the ability to generalize findings to all women-led MSMEs
- The study focuses on branding perceptions rather than financial performance indicators

These limitations have been acknowledged to maintain transparency and academic integrity.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 120 women entrepreneurs to understand the role of social media in brand visibility and positioning. The analysis is based on percentage distribution and tabular representation using MS Excel.

5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 5.1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (N = 120)

| Category | Classification | Percentage |
|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| Age | Below 30 | 34% |
| | 31–40 | 42% |
| | Above 40 | 24% |
| Education | Graduate | 48% |
| | Postgraduate | 38% |
| | Others | 14% |
| Nature of Business | Service | 52% |
| | Trading | 31% |
| | Manufacturing | 17% |

INTERPRETATION:

The respondents represent a diverse demographic profile, with a majority belonging to the 31–40 age group and service-oriented businesses, indicating high reliance on digital platforms for branding and customer outreach.

5.2 ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN BRAND VISIBILITY

TABLE 5.2: IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BRAND VISIBILITY

| Statement | Agree & Strongly Agree (%) |
|---|----------------------------|
| Social media improves brand visibility | 78% |
| Social media expands customer reach | 82% |
| Social media improves customer engagement | 75% |

INTERPRETATION:

A significant proportion of respondents perceive social media as an effective tool for improving brand visibility and expanding market reach, highlighting its importance for women-led MSMEs.

INTERPRETATION:

Skill gaps and time constraints emerge as the major barriers affecting consistent brand positioning through social media.

5.3 IMPACT ON ENTREPRENEURIAL CONFIDENCE

TABLE 5.3: SOCIAL MEDIA AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CONFIDENCE

| Statement | Agreement (%) |
|---|---------------|
| Increased confidence as an entrepreneur | 73% |
| Improved brand communication | 69% |

INTERPRETATION:

Improved confidence enables women entrepreneurs to communicate their brand more effectively, thereby strengthening brand positioning.

5.5 OVERALL IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

TABLE 5.5: OVERALL IMPACT ON BUSINESS GROWTH

| Response | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------|
| Highly Positive | 34% |
| Positive | 44% |
| Neutral | 15% |
| Negative | 7% |

INTERPRETATION:

Nearly 78% of respondents perceive social media's impact as positive, reinforcing its role as a valuable branding tool.

5.4 CHALLENGES IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BRANDING

TABLE 5.4: CHALLENGES FACED IN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

| Challenge | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Lack of digital marketing skills | 46% |
| Time constraints | 52% |
| Inconsistent content strategy | 41% |
| Difficulty understanding algorithms | 38% |

VI. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 FINDINGS

1. The study establishes that social media is a critical driver of brand visibility and market reach for women-led MSMEs, indicating its strategic importance in digital branding.
2. Enhanced entrepreneurial confidence through social media usage positively influences brand communication and customer interaction, strengthening overall brand positioning.
3. Social media is widely viewed as a cost-effective branding platform, especially for enterprises with limited marketing budgets.

4. Skill gaps related to content creation and platform management significantly restrict the ability of women entrepreneurs to maintain consistent brand positioning.
5. Time constraints arising from multiple personal and professional responsibilities further limit effective utilization of social media for branding purposes.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Women entrepreneurs should be encouraged to develop simple and consistent brand positioning strategies aligned with their target audience.
2. Training initiatives focusing on digital marketing skills, storytelling, and content planning should be introduced at institutional and community levels.
3. Adoption of content scheduling tools and calendars can help entrepreneurs maintain regular brand communication.
4. Entrepreneurs should prioritize platform-specific strategies instead of uniform content across multiple platforms.
5. Government agencies, academic institutions, and MSME support organizations should collaborate to provide practical digital branding workshops tailored for women-led enterprises.

VII. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

The study highlights the growing importance of social media as a branding tool for women-led MSMEs operating in resource-constrained environments. The findings suggest that social media platforms contribute positively to brand visibility and entrepreneurial confidence, enabling women entrepreneurs to engage with customers and communicate their brand more effectively.

At the same time, the study indicates that the benefits of social media branding are not fully realized due to challenges such as limited digital skills, time constraints, and absence of structured branding strategies. These factors affect consistency in brand communication and limit long-term positioning outcomes.

Overall, the study underscores the need for strategic and skill-based approaches to social media usage rather than mere platform adoption. By addressing existing challenges, women-led MSMEs can better

leverage digital platforms to strengthen market visibility and sustain competitive presence.

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