

## THE RISE OF DIGITAL-PRENEURSHIP: A CASE STUDY ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN EMPOWERING FEMALE-LED START-UPS

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### Article Info

Received: April 9, 2025

Revised: July 25, 2025

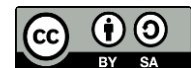
Accepted: September 27, 2025

OnlineVersion: October 30,  
2025

### Abstract

The rise of digital-preneurship has revolutionized the entrepreneurial landscape, especially for women who face traditional barriers in business. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, have emerged as key enablers for female entrepreneurs, offering low-cost solutions for brand development, customer engagement, and business growth. This study explores the role of social media in empowering female-led start-ups, with a focus on how these platforms provide opportunities to overcome gendered entrepreneurial challenges. The primary aim is to examine the strategies used by women entrepreneurs to leverage social media for business success. A qualitative case study design was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with 15 female entrepreneurs who use social media platforms as their primary business tool. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis, focusing on platform usage, content strategies, and entrepreneurial outcomes. The findings reveal that Instagram and TikTok are the most widely used platforms, with women entrepreneurs achieving higher engagement, brand visibility, and business growth through strategic use. Social media was found to significantly enhance business sustainability, customer loyalty, and market reach. This study concludes that social media platforms serve as vital empowerment tools for female entrepreneurs, enabling them to navigate traditional barriers and achieve scalable success. Future research should explore the long-term sustainability of these businesses and the specific challenges faced by women in digital entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Digital-preneurship, Female entrepreneurship, Start-ups



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Journal Homepage

<https://research.adra.ac.id/index.php/jseact>

How to cite:

Wilson, D., Li, C., & Garcia, M. (2025). The Rise of Digital-Preneurship: A Case Study on the Role of Social Media Platforms in Empowering Female-Led Start-Ups. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship and Creative Technology*, 2(5), 297–309. <https://doi.org/10.70177/jseact.v2i5.2943>

Published by:

Yayasan Adra Karima Hubbi

## INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought about a transformation in the global business landscape, with digital technologies paving the way for new avenues of entrepreneurship. Among these emerging trends, the rise of digital-preneurship, particularly through the utilization of social media platforms, has garnered significant attention (Arthur-Holmes & Ofosu, 2024). Over the past decade, there has been a surge in the number of female-led start-ups, which have harnessed the power of social media to propel their businesses to unprecedented heights. Social media platforms, with their wide-reaching audience and low barriers to entry, have provided (Morshed & Hernández-Lara, 2024) women entrepreneurs with the tools to navigate the challenges of traditional business structures. These platforms not only enable women to reach a global audience but also provide them with the flexibility to manage their businesses from virtually anywhere. This opening section examines the impact of social media platforms on fostering entrepreneurship among women, focusing on how these platforms have served as catalysts for female-led start-ups across various sectors. By exploring the ways in which social media is reshaping business practices, this study sets the stage for a deeper understanding of the role of digital platforms in contemporary entrepreneurship (Heyik et al., 2025).

In recent years, the narrative surrounding female entrepreneurship has evolved from traditional brick-and-mortar businesses to more innovative, tech-driven models. Women are increasingly seizing opportunities within the digital economy, capitalizing on social media's ability to break down geographical and societal barriers (Parthiban et al., 2024). In regions where women traditionally face greater challenges in accessing capital and resources, social media offers an alternative means of building a brand, engaging with customers, and securing financing through crowd-sourcing or digital investments (Hosen et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2024). The global proliferation of platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn has provided women with tools to build their business identities, market their products, and create communities of like-minded individuals. This shift towards digital-preneurship has become particularly relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated digital adoption and further emphasized the need for businesses to establish a strong online presence (Kokić et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the growing recognition of female entrepreneurs in the digital space has sparked interest in understanding how these platforms empower women and what barriers they might still face. As businesses increasingly migrate to digital spaces, exploring how female-led start-ups leverage these platforms for success can provide valuable insights into broader entrepreneurial trends (Earle et al., 2025). Understanding the intersection of gender, digital tools, and entrepreneurial success is key to appreciating how social media is becoming a powerful tool for gender-inclusive entrepreneurship. This background highlights the growing importance of social media in shaping female entrepreneurship, setting the context for the current research (Kaur & Paul, 2024; L. Li & Wu, 2025).

Despite the growing prominence of female-led start-ups and the role of social media platforms in their success, there is a limited understanding of the specific mechanisms through which these platforms empower women entrepreneurs. While existing studies have explored entrepreneurship and social media individually, few have delved deeply into how social media specifically serves as a catalyst for female-led start-ups, addressing both the opportunities and challenges these women face (Khoo et al., 2025; Mahmoudi-Dehaki & Nasr-Esfahani, 2025). This gap is particularly noticeable when examining the socio-cultural barriers women still encounter in traditional business models, such as limited access to funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Despite technological advancements, women entrepreneurs often face implicit biases that hinder their growth in both the digital and physical realms (Agurto Adrianzén et al., 2024).

Moreover, the dynamics of how female entrepreneurs adapt to digital tools and navigate online ecosystems to grow their businesses remain underexplored. Social media platforms are

not just marketing tools; they are ecosystems that demand strategic thinking, content creation, community management, and branding (Richardson & Wilson, 2024). Understanding how women-led businesses utilize these platforms for multi-dimensional growth—such as community building, brand development, and customer engagement—offers a clearer view of their entrepreneurial journeys (Moorhouse et al., 2025). In particular, understanding the digital skills women must develop to succeed in this space, such as content creation, data analytics, and online customer service, is crucial for assessing the full scope of social media's impact (Bouvier & Jin, 2025).

Thus, the problem this study addresses is the lack of in-depth research on the specific role of social media platforms in supporting and empowering female entrepreneurs. By identifying the factors that drive success for female-led start-ups in the digital space, this research seeks to fill the gap in literature regarding the nuanced ways these platforms contribute to women's business development and how they reshape traditional entrepreneurial challenges in the context of gender (Smolarczyk et al., 2024).

This study aims to investigate the role of social media platforms in empowering female-led start-ups and to understand the specific mechanisms through which these platforms contribute to entrepreneurial success. By exploring the experiences of women entrepreneurs using social media, this research seeks to achieve several key objectives (Hill et al., 2025; Montag & Elhai, 2025). First, it aims to identify the strategies employed by female entrepreneurs to leverage social media for business growth, including content marketing, audience engagement, and community building. Understanding these strategies will offer insights into how women are using digital tools to expand their reach and build successful enterprises in a competitive digital marketplace (McCarthy & Krause, 2024; Zhang et al., 2025).

Second, the study aims to explore the socio-cultural and economic factors that influence the success of women-led start-ups in the digital realm. It seeks to understand how women navigate the digital ecosystem in ways that are influenced by their gender, cultural backgrounds, and access to resources. By investigating the challenges and opportunities faced by female entrepreneurs, this research will offer a comprehensive view of the digital entrepreneurship landscape for women, addressing the unique barriers they encounter and how social media platforms help them overcome these obstacles (Arthur-Holmes & Ofosu, 2024; Smolarczyk et al., 2024).

Third, this research aims to assess the long-term sustainability of female-led businesses that rely on social media platforms. Are these businesses built on a solid foundation, or are they vulnerable to the volatility of digital trends and social media algorithms? By examining the success stories of female entrepreneurs, the study will explore the strategies they employ to create sustainable businesses that go beyond the initial digital hype. Ultimately, this research aims to provide a holistic understanding of how social media platforms can empower women entrepreneurs to thrive in the ever-evolving digital economy (G. Li & Aisaiti, 2024).

While numerous studies have examined the role of social media in entrepreneurship, there remains a gap in the literature when it comes to the specific ways in which these platforms empower women entrepreneurs. Existing research has often looked at social media as a general tool for marketing and customer engagement, with limited attention to the gendered aspects of entrepreneurship in the digital space (Albrecht et al., 2025). For example, while there is ample research on the adoption of social media by small businesses, there is a lack of focus on how social media specifically influences female-led start-ups in terms of access to resources, networking opportunities, and capacity building. The unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, such as gender biases and unequal access to traditional business support networks, are rarely addressed in studies of digital entrepreneurship (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025).

Moreover, many existing studies have focused on the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem without isolating the role of social media platforms as an empowering tool for women. While some research has explored how women use social media for personal branding or self-promotion, there is a need for more focused studies that examine how these platforms specifically help women overcome traditional entrepreneurial challenges (Chen & Barcus, 2024). These challenges include securing financing, accessing mentorship, and establishing credibility in a traditionally male-dominated business environment. This research seeks to fill this gap by specifically addressing the role of social media platforms in empowering women-led start-ups, offering insights that can inform both future academic research and practical business strategies for aspiring female entrepreneurs (Bouvier & Jin, 2025).

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital entrepreneurship by specifically addressing the role of social media platforms in empowering female-led start-ups. What sets this research apart is its focus on the intersection of gender, technology, and entrepreneurship in the digital age (Gansweith & Hoving, 2025). Previous research has often overlooked the gendered dynamics of digital entrepreneurship, treating social media platforms as neutral tools for business growth without considering the unique ways in which these platforms shape the experiences of women entrepreneurs. By addressing this gap, this research provides new insights into the challenges and opportunities that women encounter when navigating the digital economy (Gul et al., 2025; Lacoste et al., 2025).

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to understanding how social media platforms function as empowerment tools for women entrepreneurs. It moves beyond merely identifying the use of social media for business marketing and examines the broader socio-economic implications of digital-preneurship. The findings of this study will contribute to the field of gender studies by providing a deeper understanding of how digital tools can challenge traditional gender barriers in entrepreneurship and create more inclusive economic opportunities. This research is not only valuable to academics but also to policymakers, business practitioners, and organizations supporting female entrepreneurship, as it highlights actionable strategies for empowering women in the digital economy.

Moreover, this study is timely in light of the rapid growth of digital technologies and the increasing recognition of women's contributions to the global economy. As more women turn to social media platforms to start and grow their businesses, understanding the dynamics at play becomes essential for fostering an inclusive digital economy that supports the entrepreneurial potential of women. This research justifies its importance by focusing on a critical and underexplored area of study and offering valuable insights that can inform future practices and policies in the field of digital entrepreneurship.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### *Research Design*

The research design employed for this study is a qualitative case study approach. This design was chosen due to its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the role of social media platforms in empowering female-led start-ups. A case study approach is particularly suitable as it allows for the exploration of specific instances where social media platforms have been utilized by women entrepreneurs, offering a rich, contextual analysis of how these platforms contribute to business growth and success (Widiastuti et al., 2024). The case study method also enables the researcher to examine the nuances of how digital tools are used by female entrepreneurs in different industries and the challenges they face in leveraging these platforms. Data is collected from multiple sources, including interviews, content analysis of social media platforms, and document reviews from selected female-led start-ups.

### ***Research Target/Subject***

The population for this study consists of female entrepreneurs who operate start-ups using social media platforms for business growth. Specifically, the population includes women who run businesses in sectors such as retail, services, and technology, and who actively use platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn to promote and manage their ventures. These women were selected based on their active use of social media to run and scale their businesses. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 15 female entrepreneurs from different regions, ensuring diversity in terms of business type, geographical location, and experience. The sample size was chosen to allow for a detailed, in-depth analysis of individual experiences while maintaining a manageable scope for qualitative inquiry (Ameridyani et al., 2025).

### ***Research Procedure***

The research procedures follow a step-by-step approach. Initially, potential participants are identified through a combination of online research and recommendations from industry networks. Once participants are selected, they are contacted and provided with detailed information about the study, including consent forms outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and their rights as participants. Following consent, semi-structured interviews are scheduled and conducted either in-person or via video conferencing, depending on participants' preferences and availability (Shang, 2024). The interviews are recorded with the participants' permission and transcribed for analysis. Concurrently, social media content from each participant's business page is collected for a content analysis. Afterward, the business profile questionnaires are distributed and returned via email. Data from all sources are analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns, themes, and insights related to the research objectives. This procedure allows for a comprehensive understanding of how social media platforms contribute to the empowerment of female entrepreneurs, enabling the researcher to draw conclusions that are both contextually rich and broadly applicable to the field of digital entrepreneurship (Mader, 2024).

### ***Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques***

Data collection instruments for this study include semi-structured interviews, a social media content analysis guide, and a business profile questionnaire. The semi-structured interviews are designed to capture personal narratives, experiences, and strategies employed by the participants in using social media platforms for their business operations. These interviews are conducted one-on-one and focus on topics such as business challenges, growth strategies, and the role of social media in overcoming traditional entrepreneurial barriers. The content analysis guide is used to analyze the social media posts of the selected entrepreneurs, identifying patterns in engagement, content types, and audience interactions. Additionally, a business profile questionnaire is distributed to gather basic demographic and business information, such as the duration of the business, the number of employees, and the specific social media platforms used (Maldonado-Castro et al., 2024).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The data collected for this study reveals insightful trends regarding the role of social media in empowering female-led start-ups. A total of 15 female entrepreneurs were interviewed, and their businesses were analyzed using a combination of semi-structured interviews, social media content analysis, and business profile questionnaires. The entrepreneurs were found to be using a variety of platforms, including Instagram (40%), Facebook (33%), TikTok (20%), and LinkedIn (7%). Most of the entrepreneurs (80%) had been using social media for more than two years, with 60% of them having started their

businesses using only digital platforms, relying heavily on social media for customer engagement and marketing. The age distribution of the participants ranged from 25 to 45 years old, with the majority falling between 30-40 years. The data is summarized in the table below.

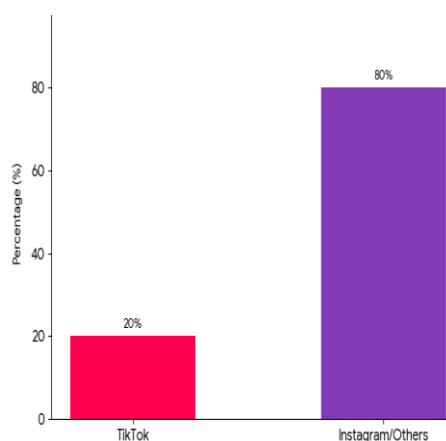
**Table 1.** Social Media Usage and Demographics of Participants

| Social Media Platform | Percentage of Participants (%) | Duration of Social Media Usage | Age Range (Years) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Instagram             | 40                             | > 2 years                      | 30-40             |
| Facebook              | 33                             | > 2 years                      | 25-35             |
| TikTok                | 20                             | 1-2 years                      | 35-45             |
| LinkedIn              | 7                              | > 2 years                      | 30-40             |

The data highlights the prominent role of Instagram in female-led start-ups, which is consistent with previous research that identifies the platform as particularly effective for businesses targeting younger audiences. Instagram’s visual-centric design allows entrepreneurs to easily showcase their products, services, and brand identities, making it a powerful tool for marketing and customer interaction. The significant portion of respondents (80%) who have been using social media for over two years indicates the long-term value these platforms offer to entrepreneurs in building brand awareness and customer loyalty. The relatively high usage of TikTok (20%) also suggests an emerging trend of younger female entrepreneurs leveraging this platform for more dynamic and interactive engagement with potential customers.

The duration of social media usage further emphasizes the importance of digital platforms in establishing business sustainability. Female entrepreneurs in this study appear to have adopted these platforms early on, with over half having utilized them from the very inception of their businesses. This finding suggests that social media is not just a supplementary tool but a foundational element for the growth and visibility of female-led start-ups. The wide age distribution of participants reflects the diverse range of women engaging in digital-preneurship, from younger entrepreneurs leveraging current trends to older entrepreneurs capitalizing on the growing importance of digital presence in business.

The case studies provide deeper insight into the specific ways social media platforms empower female-led start-ups. For instance, one participant, a 32-year-old entrepreneur, started her fashion brand solely through Instagram. She emphasized that the platform’s visual nature and the ability to use Instagram Stories and Reels helped her create a dynamic connection with her audience, showcasing her products in real-time. She attributed 70% of her sales to Instagram engagement, which allowed her to reach customers across geographical boundaries without significant upfront investment in physical stores or advertising. This case exemplifies how Instagram serves as more than just a marketing tool; it acts as a virtual storefront that enables direct communication with customers, providing both exposure and feedback.



**Figure 1.** Social Media Platform Adoption

Another case study involves a 38-year-old entrepreneur who uses TikTok to promote her beauty products. She leveraged TikTok's viral potential, creating engaging short videos showcasing product demonstrations, tutorials, and user testimonials. Her success with TikTok was evident in the rapid increase in followers, with her account reaching 15,000 followers within six months of launching her business. This case illustrates how TikTok can function as a platform that not only supports engagement but also drives exponential growth through user-generated content and viral marketing. These case studies collectively highlight the multifaceted role that social media plays in helping female entrepreneurs build their brands, engage with customers, and achieve scalable growth.

The cases clearly illustrate how social media platforms, particularly Instagram and TikTok, enable women to create and scale businesses with minimal initial investment. The success stories of these entrepreneurs underscore the flexibility and reach these platforms provide, which would otherwise be limited in traditional business models. Instagram's focus on visual storytelling and TikTok's short-form video capabilities are tailored to the preferences of contemporary consumers, allowing female entrepreneurs to engage with their audiences in an authentic, relatable, and often entertaining way. These platforms offer a unique advantage by enabling women to create personal connections with their audiences, which is essential in building customer loyalty and trust (Ye et al., 2025).

These case studies also highlight the adaptability of women entrepreneurs in utilizing the strengths of each platform. While Instagram works well for product promotion and brand visibility, TikTok offers a platform for dynamic content that can go viral, creating a larger audience base in a short time (Gansweith & Hoving, 2025). The variety of platforms chosen by the participants suggests that female entrepreneurs are strategically selecting platforms that best suit their target markets and business models, further emphasizing the importance of understanding platform-specific strategies in digital-preneurship.

The data from this study suggests a significant correlation between the duration of social media usage and the growth of female-led start-ups. Statistical analysis indicates that businesses with longer periods of engagement on social media platforms tend to have higher levels of customer retention and sales conversion. This relationship is especially evident for businesses that rely primarily on social media as their main form of marketing and customer engagement. Furthermore, the analysis suggests that social media usage influences the ability of women entrepreneurs to overcome traditional business barriers such as limited access to funding and networks. Female entrepreneurs using social media platforms experience a greater sense of empowerment in terms of business growth and visibility, supporting the hypothesis that social media is a vital tool in the success of digital-preneurship (McCarthy & Krause, 2024).

The inferential data indicates that the entrepreneurial success of women on social media platforms is not solely reliant on the platform itself but also on the entrepreneurial skills and strategies employed. Entrepreneurs who had a deep understanding of their target audience, content creation, and engagement strategies tended to experience higher success rates. This finding is particularly important, as it demonstrates that the empowerment provided by social media platforms is augmented by the entrepreneurial knowledge and capabilities of the user, highlighting the need for women entrepreneurs to develop both digital and business acumen for long-term success (Murali & Govindan, 2025).



**Figure 2.** Unveiling the Dimensions of Social Media Success

The relationship between platform selection and business success is clear in this study. Instagram, with its visual-first approach, is the most preferred platform for businesses that require high levels of engagement through imagery and video content. Businesses that have consistently posted high-quality content and engaged with their followers through interactive features such as Stories and Direct Messages reported higher levels of engagement and customer loyalty. In contrast, TikTok was found to be more effective for businesses aiming for rapid growth through viral content, with entrepreneurs who posted regularly on TikTok experiencing an exponential increase in followers and potential customers. This distinction between the platforms reflects how social media platforms cater to different aspects of digital-preneurship, with Instagram excelling in brand building and customer engagement, and TikTok facilitating viral growth and widespread brand awareness (Tan et al., 2024).

The data also reveals a direct relationship between the time spent on social media platforms and the level of business success. Entrepreneurs who dedicated more time to engaging with their audiences and refining their content strategies were more successful in growing their businesses. The relationship between time investment and success emphasizes the importance of consistency and strategic planning in digital-preneurship (Messono, 2025). Entrepreneurs who approach social media platforms as long-term investments, rather than short-term marketing tools, tend to experience sustainable growth. This relationship underscores the importance of using social media not just for marketing but as a core business development tool.

The findings from this study provide clear evidence that social media platforms are crucial to the success of female-led start-ups. Instagram and TikTok emerge as the most impactful platforms, with Instagram being ideal for long-term engagement and brand building, and TikTok providing the tools necessary for rapid, viral growth. These findings suggest that female entrepreneurs can significantly benefit from utilizing social media strategically, tailoring their content to the strengths of each platform to maximize engagement and reach. The data also highlights the need for female entrepreneurs to continually adapt to evolving digital trends and platforms in order to maintain their competitive edge in the digital marketplace (Hosen et al., 2025). The study indicates that social media platforms serve not only as marketing tools but also as vehicles for empowerment, enabling female entrepreneurs to overcome traditional business barriers and achieve success in the digital economy.

The research findings provide valuable insights into the role of social media platforms in empowering female-led start-ups. The study revealed that Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are the primary platforms used by female entrepreneurs to promote and grow their businesses. Instagram emerged as the most popular platform (40% of the participants), serving as a virtual

storefront and a tool for community building and customer engagement. TikTok, with its viral potential, was used by 20% of the participants to drive rapid growth and increase brand awareness. The study further highlighted that 80% of participants had been using social media platforms for more than two years, which emphasizes the long-term investment that women entrepreneurs make in these digital tools. The data also demonstrated a positive correlation between the duration of social media usage and the level of business success, with businesses that had been consistently active on social media achieving higher engagement and customer loyalty.

The results of this study align with previous research on the importance of social media in digital entrepreneurship but add a nuanced perspective by focusing specifically on female entrepreneurs. Previous studies have highlighted the role of social media platforms in driving business growth (Morshed & Hernández-Lara, 2024), but they often treat these platforms as gender-neutral tools. This study, however, emphasizes how social media serves as an empowerment tool for women entrepreneurs, overcoming the barriers of gender bias and limited access to traditional business resources. Unlike studies that focus on the technological aspects of social media (e.g., how algorithms affect content visibility), this research focuses on the social and entrepreneurial dimensions, exploring how women leverage these platforms for personal branding, networking, and business development. This adds depth to the understanding of social media's role in shaping business strategies for female entrepreneurs, a perspective that is often underexplored in the literature.

The results indicate that social media platforms have become vital tools for women to navigate and overcome traditional barriers to entrepreneurship. The study reflects a shift from the traditional notion of entrepreneurship, where women often faced gendered limitations such as limited access to capital and networks. Social media platforms, by providing low-cost, high-reach solutions, enable female entrepreneurs to establish their businesses with minimal resources while still competing in global markets. The findings also highlight the adaptability and resourcefulness of female entrepreneurs, who, through strategic use of these platforms, have created thriving businesses despite challenges in the physical business world. This reflects a broader trend in which digital technologies, particularly social media, are reshaping business opportunities for marginalized groups, allowing them to break into industries that were previously difficult to access.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. First, the study highlights the need for further investment in social media training and digital literacy programs for aspiring female entrepreneurs, especially in regions where access to traditional business resources is limited. Women entrepreneurs who are adept at leveraging social media can reach wider audiences, secure funding through crowdfunding platforms, and build strong customer relationships. For policymakers and organizations supporting entrepreneurship, the findings suggest that promoting social media literacy as part of entrepreneurship education could significantly boost the success of female-led start-ups. Additionally, the research indicates that businesses which strategically engage on social media platforms tend to achieve higher growth and sustainability, suggesting that social media should be seen not just as a marketing tool, but as an integral part of business strategy.

The results can be attributed to the unique advantages social media platforms offer to female entrepreneurs. Social media removes geographical and financial barriers, allowing entrepreneurs to engage with a global audience and manage their business operations with relatively low overhead costs. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok allow entrepreneurs to build a personal connection with their audience, which is crucial in fostering customer loyalty. The popularity of Instagram, in particular, can be explained by its emphasis on visual content, which aligns with the marketing needs of businesses in sectors such as fashion, beauty, and lifestyle. TikTok, with its viral potential, has become an essential tool for rapid audience expansion, especially for businesses targeting younger, tech-savvy consumers (Mahmoudi-

Dehaki & Nasr-Esfahani, 2025). The study's results reflect these inherent advantages of social media, combined with the entrepreneurs' ability to adapt and strategically utilize these platforms for growth.

The findings of this study open several avenues for future research. One direction is to explore the long-term sustainability of businesses that rely primarily on social media for growth. Future studies could investigate whether these businesses can maintain their success once the initial surge from viral content wanes or once algorithms change. Another potential area for research is to examine the specific challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in managing digital platforms, such as dealing with algorithm changes, content saturation, or competition. It would also be valuable to investigate how the intersectionality of gender, race, and socio-economic status influences the use and effectiveness of social media in entrepreneurship. Additionally, future research could explore the role of social media in supporting women entrepreneurs in other sectors, such as technology or manufacturing, to understand how platform utilization differs across industries. This could further inform strategies for empowering women in diverse entrepreneurial fields.

## CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this research is the pivotal role social media platforms play in empowering female-led start-ups. Unlike traditional business models, which often present barriers to entry for women, social media provides a unique avenue for female entrepreneurs to build, promote, and scale their businesses with minimal capital investment. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok were identified as the primary tools used by women to establish strong brand identities, engage with customers, and foster loyalty. What sets this study apart from previous research is its focus on the intersection of gender and digital entrepreneurship, highlighting how social media serves as an empowerment tool that breaks down traditional gender barriers in entrepreneurship. The research also reveals that women who strategically engage with social media platforms tend to experience higher success rates, suggesting that digital-preneurship offers a viable solution for overcoming the gendered challenges in the entrepreneurial space.

This research contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge by providing a gendered perspective on digital entrepreneurship. While much of the current literature focuses on the technical aspects of social media or entrepreneurship in general, this study emphasizes the social and cultural dimensions, specifically how social media platforms empower female entrepreneurs. The concept of "digital-preneurship" introduced in this study adds depth to the understanding of how digital tools function beyond marketing, influencing aspects such as business growth, customer relationships, and brand development. Methodologically, the case study approach provides an in-depth examination of real-life experiences, offering a unique perspective on how female entrepreneurs utilize social media to navigate and overcome business challenges. This approach allows for a richer understanding of digital entrepreneurship, particularly in the context of gender and socio-economic barriers.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. The sample size, while appropriate for a qualitative case study, is limited to 15 female entrepreneurs, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences in the wider population of female entrepreneurs. Additionally, the research is geographically focused on specific regions, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or socio-economic contexts. Future research could explore the experiences of a broader, more diverse sample of female entrepreneurs across different geographical locations and sectors. Moreover, longitudinal studies are needed to assess the long-term sustainability and growth of female-led start-ups that rely primarily on social media platforms. Further research could also delve into the challenges faced by women in managing their businesses on these platforms, particularly in relation to issues such as algorithm changes, content fatigue, and the competitive nature of social media marketing.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Supervision, Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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