



A STUDY ON GROWTH OF ONLINE WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS DURING COVID PANDEMIC

¹Dr.Jasminedeporal,G.D, ²N.Gayatri, ²S.HareDevi,

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, PSGR Krishnammal College for Women Coimbatore.

²B.A. Economics, Department of Economics, PSGR Krishnammal College for Women Coimbatore.

Abstract:

The COVID 19 pandemic represents an unprecedented disruption to the global economy and world trade as production and consumption are scaled back across the globe. When the world has been locked indoors due to COVID pandemic, social media was the only possible way to communicate, to sell the products, for entertainment and for education. Social media boosts your visibility among potential customers, letting you reach a wide audience by using a large amount of time and effort and it's free to create a business profile. Social media is increasingly supporting a lot of female entrepreneurs. It helps them to enhance their business and their brand products. Social media has proven to be the most effective way for business to reach new audience on a global scale. In this study data has been collected through random sampling method, the sample size of 50 women entrepreneurs in Singanallur. In this study analyzed Regression and Chi – Square test and ANOVA. The findings of this study shows the growth and sales of online business after covid. Covid pandemic encouraged nearly 30 percent of the respondents to own a online business in social media and for 54 percent of the respondents their sales were increased after COVID pandemic. Majority of the respondents consider earning profit from home, wider advertisement for business as the most important benefit of being social media women entrepreneur. Thus pandemic situation paved a way for emerging successful social media women entrepreneurs.

Key words: COVID, Social media, Women Entrepreneur

INTRODUCTION

The COVID 19 pandemic represents an unprecedented disruption to the global

economy and world trade as production and consumption are scaled back across the

globe. India was greatly affected by the pandemic in various sectors. When the world has been locked indoors due to COVID pandemic, social media was the only possible way to communicate, to sell the products, for entertainment and for education. This situation has led to a surge in e-commerce accelerated digital transformation. Ecommerce's share of global retail trade had been raised from 14 percent to 17 percent. Many companies that are totally new to the digital environment are starting to see social media marketing as a simple, inexpensive way to raise awareness and make a name for themselves. Social media provides immense potential for businesses because consumers habitually log on to it daily and are exposed to companies. Social media boosts your visibility among potential customers, letting you reach a wide audience by using a large amount of time, effort and it's free to create a business profile. Social media is assisting in placing women entrepreneurs upon that map because of its inclusion, diversity and incredible possibilities. There has also been a promising increase in the number of women entrepreneurs that are stepping out into the spotlight especially small home-grown businesses, many of which have flourished despite the pandemic. Social

media is increasingly supporting a lot of female entrepreneurs. It helps them to enhance their business and their brand products. Large women's communities are now able to connect with each other to promote, support and access each other's businesses from the comfort of their own home.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Patil (2020) he explained on "**Study to assess the scope and Essential Factors to Market a Business on social media with special reference to Home Based Women Entrepreneurs**". He concluded that due to technological advancements and the increasing number of social media users, the scope of doing business on social media is very promising. There has been a rise in the number of home based women entrepreneurs starting their business ventures on social media. This looks like a huge opportunity for the home based women entrepreneurs.

Rahayu (2021) et al in their study on "**Women Entrepreneurs and the usage of social media for Business sustainability in the Time of COVID -19**" estimated the knowledge generated through this work may

help reduce the unplanned losses that businesses face during times of crisis and help policymakers address the economic and social vulnerabilities of women entrepreneurs—especially when they are disproportionately affected, as in the current pandemic.

Merza (2019) explained on **“The role and importance of social media on women entrepreneurship”** estimated that women entrepreneurs use social media as their primary tool for business. This study details on how women use these tools effectively in their online businesses. The study finding suggest that the ease of use and security of social media are not positively related with the women entrepreneurship and it can be concluded that the security & ease in social media do not support the women entrepreneurship.

Mustafa (2021) et al in their study **“Exploring the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on women entrepreneurs in Pakistan”** investigated the impact of COVID 19 lockdown on micro businesses owned by women borrowers of micro finance institutions and to provide policy suggestions to assist women entrepreneurs in managing this unexpected crises. This

study adopted a qualitative research design and semi structured interviews to explore the impact of COVID 19 on women’s entrepreneurial activities. The result revealed that the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on the physical, mental and economic wellbeing of women highlights the need for considering gender gap issues in forming response policies for COVID 19 in developing countries.

Genc (2015) et al in their study **“A fact or illusion, effective social media usage of female entrepreneurs”** explains that the focuses on micro sale entrepreneurs who cannot act on traditional media. In this research semi structured interviews, qualitative approach is applied. According to results, Facebook preserves it functions as a primary source of marketing communication. According to the study ,advantages of social media includes low cost information, disclosure, instant messaging and wide networking and disadvantages are imitations of works, unidentified target audience, unfair competitions.

METHODOLOGY

Social media often been looked at as a platform for communication & engagement between users, but it is

drastically evolving beyond that. Social media has proven to be the most effective way for business to reach new audience on a global scale. In this study data has been collected through random sampling method with the sample size of 50 women entrepreneurs in Singanallur. In singanallur, where educated people and online trading are found more, elicited through a questionnaire method. The schedule contained questions on investment methods of the respondents, uses, problems and income of the women entrepreneurs in social media marketing. The analysis includes demographic profile, business sector and

income in research and investigation as follows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study shows the Demographic profile and Business portfolio of the respondents and helps us further to compare the implications before covid and after covid in income, sales decline, factors affected due to covid, reasons for using social media for business. These factors helps us to analyze the growth of women entrepreneurs during pandemic in social media. The detailed discussions are as follows:

Table I
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

AGE					
Particulars	18-25	26-33	34-41	Above 41	Total
Frequency	15	20	10	5	50
Percentage	30	40	20	10	100
EDUCATION					
Particulars	Higher Secondary	Diploma	U. G	P. G	Total
Frequency	8	12	16	14	50
Percentage	14	3	80	3	100
MARITAL STATUS					
Particulars	Married	Unmarried		Widow	Total
Frequency	20	25		5	50
Percentage	40	50		10	100
NO. OF EMPLOYEES					
Particulars	0 Employees	1 – 3 Employees		More Than 3 Employees	Total
Frequency	26	21		3	50
Percentage	52	42		6	100

Source: Field Survey 2022

In the above table, 70 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-33years, 80 percent are under-graduates and 50 percent of the women entrepreneurs were unmarried. From this we can estimate that young and educated women entrepreneurs are attracted more towards online business. Education plays an essential role in entrepreneurship, as it provides women with the skills necessary to identify opportunities, establish a business, and make

decisions effectively. Entrepreneurs with higher levels of education are significantly more likely to innovate than entrepreneurs with little to no education, (Rahayu 2021). 52 percent of the respondents does not have any employees, only 6 percent of the respondents employed more than 3 employees. It further denotes that online business entrepreneurs can earn profit of their own without any employees and wages.

TABLE II
Details of Business portfolio

COMMENCING OF BUSINESS					
Particulars	Before Covid		After Covid		Total
Frequency	18		32		50
Percentage	36		64		100
INFLUENCE TO A BUSINESS					
Particulars	Friends	Family and Relatives	Motivated by Profit Earning Entrepreneurs	Advertisement	Total
Frequency	6	19	23	2	50
Percentage	12	38	46	4	100
BUSINESS PLATFORM					
Particulars	Whatsapp	Instagram	Facebook	All the 3	Total
Frequency	8	10	5	27	50
Percentage	16	20	10	54	100
BUSINESS SECTOR					
Particulars	Food	Tailoring/Fashion	Beauty	Crafts	Total
Frequency	15	27	4	4	50
Percentage	30	54	8	8	100
SOURCE OF INITIAL INVESTMENT					
Particulars	Friends	Spouse and Family	Financial Institution	Others	Total
Frequency	18	25	5	2	50
Percentage	36	50	10	4	100
EXPERIENCE IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA					
Particulars	1-4 years	4- 8 years	10 yrs & above	Total	

Frequency	31	18	1	50
Percentage	62	36	2	100

Source: Field Survey 2022

In the above table, 64 percent of the respondents commenced their business after pandemic. 46 percent of the women entrepreneurs were motivated by profit earning entrepreneurs which influenced them to start up an online business. 54 percent of the women entrepreneurs use whatsapp and instagram as a business platform. 54 percent of the respondents are involved in fashion business sector. Half the

respondents are interested with fashion online business and for 50 percent of the women entrepreneurs their family and spouse are the source of initial investment. 62 percent of the respondents are experienced 1-4 years as online business women entrepreneurs. This is the major season for the women entrepreneurs to start up an own business where the expenses are less with high profit.

TABLE III
Income of the Respondents

INCOME BEFORE COVID				
Particulars	1000 - 5000	6000 - 10000	10000 & Above	Total
Frequency	24	20	6	50
Percentage	48	40	12	100
INCOME AFTER COVID				
Particulars	1000 - 5000	6000 - 10000	Above – Rs.10000	Total
Frequency	25	17	8	50
Percentage	50	34	16	100

Source: Field Survey 2022

In the above table shows 48 percent of the respondents earned income between 1000 - 5000 before COVID pandemic and only 12 percent of the respondents earned income rupees 10,000 and above. 50 percent

of the respondent earned income between 1000- 5000 after COVID pandemic and 16 percent of the respondents earned income 10000 and above.

TABLE IV
Implications of Covid

DECLINE IN SALES				
Particulars	BEFORE COVID		AFTER COVID	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent

Yes	28	56	23	46
No	22	44	27	54
Total	50	100	50	100
FACTORS AFFECTED				
Raw material & Production	5	10	5	10
Delivery and Distribution	24	48	25	50
Communication with customers and suppliers	16	32	19	38
Others	5	10	1	2
Total	50	100	50	100
REASONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS				
User friendly	23	46	23	46
Affordable	21	42	8	16
Trend and market demand	6	12	19	38
Total	50	100	50	100

Source: Field Survey 2022

The above table explains that the 56 percent of the respondent accepted that their sales declined before COVID but only 46 percent of the respondent accepted that their sales declined after COVID, the pandemic encouraged women to seek alternative strategies, selling their products online when offline business activities were impossible. Rapidly embracing an online format enabled women to continue reaching customers during the lockdown when face to face interactions were limited (Rahayu 2021). For 48 percent of the respondents, their

delivery and distribution of goods got affected before pandemic and for 50 percent of the respondents, their delivery and distribution of goods got affected after pandemic. 46 percent of the women entrepreneurs consider social media business as user friendly. Social media provides an easy, user friendly and very economical platform for rapidly disseminating information to diverse markets as such it has paved the way for the growth of women entrepreneurs (Duggal and Gupta 2020).

TABLE V
Uses of social media women entrepreneur

USAGE OF BEING SOCIAL MEDIA ENTREPRENEUR		
Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Low investment & High income	5	10
Earning Profit from home	20	40
Wider advertisement for business	20	40
Easy to access world wide	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey 2022

There were various uses of social media for online business as per the respondents considered earning profit from home and wider advertisement for business are major merits of being social media entrepreneurs and 10% of the respondents consider low investment and high income, easy to access worldwide were other uses of social media in online business. According to a study by the world conference on technology innovation and entrepreneurship,

“Flexibility has been enthusiastically welcomed since it is believed that online business provides a balance between work & personal life, especially in terms of women’s participation. While concerning flexibility much of the literature focuses on women in terms of their family responsibilities. It is argued that flexible work arrangements help women with children by reducing their stress. Thus, they become more productive & satisfied with their jobs”.

TABLE VI
Problems of social media women entrepreneur

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Privacy and Security problem	18	36
Exposed to trolls	4	8
Problems are visible	15	30
Need lots of time	8	16
Others	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey 2022

The above table shows the problems of being social media entrepreneur. Majority of the respondents consider privacy & security as a major problem for being a social media entrepreneur. 30% of the respondents consider that problems are easily risible in the social media which is another major issue for being a social media entrepreneur. The other problems as mentioned by respondents were that social

media facilitates potential customers to access the online portfolios of participants, this open access to photos also causes their rivals who follow them to imitate their works. Thus this characteristic of social media works as a two-sided medallion, on the other hand since there have been unlimited number of potential customers on social media, it is not always possible for

entrepreneurs to identify their target audience (Genc, Oksuz 2015).

Figure – 1
Problems of Social Media

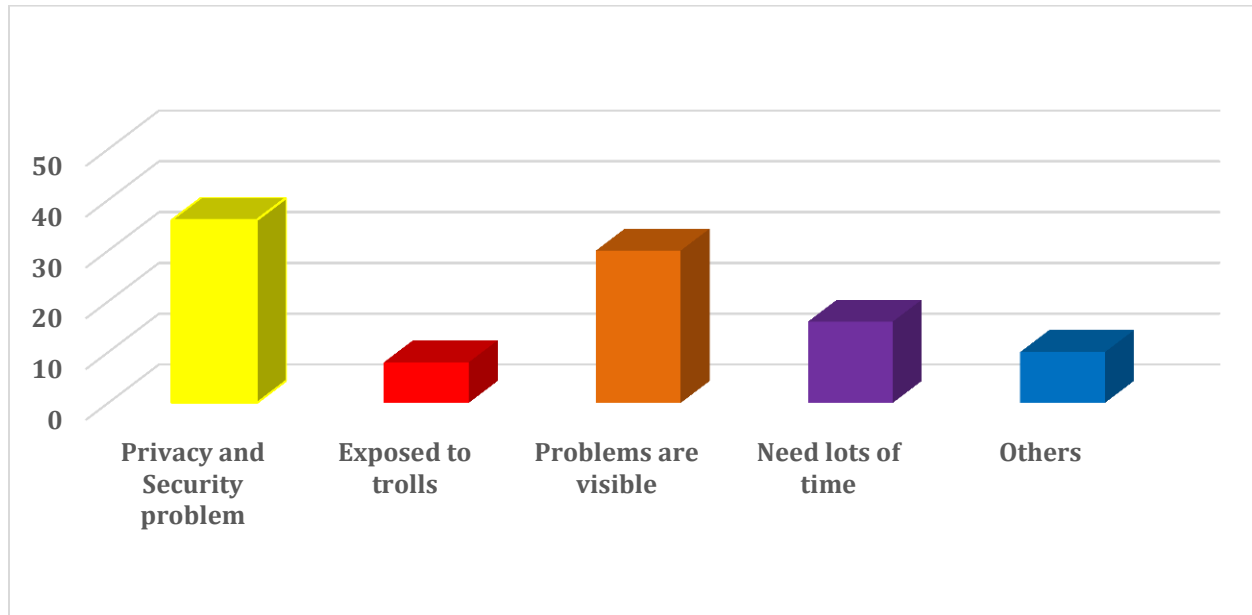


TABLE VII
Relationship between after covid income of the respondents

Variable	β	t	Sig
Age	-0.160	-0.876	0.386
Marital Status	0.044	0.133	0.895
Education	0.278	1.508	0.139
No.of employed	-0.028	-0.166	0.869
Business Sector	0.274	1.913	0.062**
Investment	0.345	2.801	0.008*
$R^2 = 0.566$			
$F = 3.369$			

Dependent Variable: After covid income

** Significant at 1% level

*Significant at 5% level

In this study output had defined that Business sector is significant at 1 percent level and Investment is significant at 5 percent level when dependent variable is **after covid income**.

CONCLUSION

Covid pandemic paused all the economical activities throughout the country. The only way to communicate with others is

social media which connected all with low cost and comfort. We used social media for many purposes. Especially for educational sector and business sector, social media was the best substitute of offline activities. Many women entrepreneurs used this platform as a backbone for their business growth which helped them to earn more income with low investment. This study investigated the growth of women entrepreneurs during Covid pandemic, from this we can conclude that social media attracted young women entrepreneurs to start their own business. Income levels and sales of online business had an enormous growth after covid pandemic which further boosted women entrepreneurs to create their own brands in the market.

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