

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Social Media's Role in the Success of Female Entrepreneurs in Bali's Tourism, Indonesia: An Innovative Marketing

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ABSTRACT

The study underscores the profound impact of social media marketing on the brand image and customer engagement of tourism businesses in Bali. Businesses that consistently project a positive and authentic image on social media platforms can foster trust and credibility, leading to increased brand loyalty and repeat business. However, small businesses encounter challenges such as time constraints and lack of technical expertise in implementing effective social media strategies. Outsourcing social media marketing or hiring professionals with the necessary expertise is recommended to address these obstacles. By prioritizing content sharing, brand image building, and customer engagement, small tourism businesses can effectively leverage social media to compete with larger players and reach a broader audience, ultimately enhancing their sales performance and remaining competitive in the evolving landscape of social media marketing.

KEYWORDS

social media marketing, women entrepreneurs, tourism business

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ Social media marketing significantly improves sales performance through enhanced customer feedback, communication, content sharing, and relationship-building.
- ❖ Most women-owned tourism businesses in Bali are small-scale, offline-focused, yet increasingly adopting hybrid and digital marketing strategies.
- ❖ Entrepreneurs aged 26–35 are the most active users of social media marketing, highlighting the digital readiness of younger business owners.
- ❖ Despite limited budgets, frequent use of social media marketing correlates with greater visibility and competitiveness in Bali's tourism sector.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of internet technologies and social media platforms has profoundly reshaped how businesses operate and engage with consumers (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In Indonesia—a country with a vast and growing internet user base—platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok play a

crucial role in connecting individuals and businesses (Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information, 2020). Within the tourism sector in Bali, social media marketing has emerged as an essential tool for female entrepreneurs seeking to establish visibility, foster brand loyalty, and maintain competitiveness in an increasingly digital marketplace (Umami & Darma, 2021).

This study explores the intersection of two pivotal elements: the rise of women entrepreneurs in Bali's tourism industry and the strategic use of social media marketing to support their business growth. Balinese society is traditionally shaped by defined gender roles, which can restrict women's access to entrepreneurial resources and networks. Nevertheless, social media presents a unique opportunity for women to bypass some of these structural limitations, offering cost-effective avenues for global outreach, customer interaction, and brand development (Tajeddini et al., 2017). By leveraging these digital platforms, female entrepreneurs can cultivate more autonomous and empowered roles in the local economy.

The research aims to assess how specific aspects of social media marketing—namely customer feedback, communication, content sharing, and customer relationships—affect the sales performance of women-owned tourism businesses. Theoretical underpinnings drawn from prior studies indicate that each of these factors plays a significant role in digital engagement and consumer behavior. For instance, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through customer feedback has been shown to influence purchasing decisions and brand perception (Steward et al., 2018; Rosario et al., 2016). Similarly, content sharing strategies that emphasize relevance, trustworthiness, and interactivity can directly impact customer satisfaction and loyalty (Hwang et al., 2018; Kang & Park, 2018).

To achieve a data-driven understanding, the study employed a quantitative methodology involving 175 female entrepreneurs in Bali's tourism industry. Participants represented various business types—ranging from restaurants and souvenir shops to spas and travel services—most of which operated with limited staff and primarily offline. However, a significant proportion utilized hybrid models, combining both physical and digital sales channels. This diversity enabled a more nuanced analysis of how social media strategies are adopted across different business scales and models.

Data collection was conducted through structured questionnaires comprising two sections: demographic and business profiles, and Likert-scale evaluations of the four key social media variables and sales performance. The analysis utilized statistical tools such as descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression to evaluate the relationships between variables. The findings confirmed the hypothesized significance of all four social media marketing components on business performance, underscoring their strategic importance (Sufian et al., 2020).

Among the demographic insights, the majority of respondents were young entrepreneurs aged 26–35, signaling a generational readiness to engage with digital tools. Most of these women used social media "often," despite having limited budgets—typically under Rp30,000,000 annually—for marketing expenditures. These insights highlight a trend toward grassroots-level digital innovation, even in resource-constrained settings, where strategic content and relationship-building outweigh financial investment.

From a broader perspective, the study illustrates how social media marketing serves not only as a promotional tool but as a transformative mechanism for economic empowerment. Through enhanced visibility, engagement, and communication, women entrepreneurs are able to compete more effectively in a saturated tourism market. The study recommends increased investment in digital literacy, expanded access to marketing expertise, and the adoption of hybrid operational models to improve sustainability and revenue generation in the sector.

In conclusion, this research contributes valuable knowledge on the role of digital innovation in supporting women-led entrepreneurship within the tourism landscape of Bali. It confirms that social media marketing is not merely a supplementary business function but a central pillar in driving sales performance, customer loyalty, and long-term competitiveness. Future studies are encouraged to broaden the sample

size, explore longitudinal effects, and include additional variables to further enhance the generalizability and strategic applicability of these findings.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for considering participants and data in the study

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	Female entrepreneurs operating tourism-related businesses in Bali who have utilized social media for marketing purposes	Male entrepreneurs; businesses outside the tourism sector; entrepreneurs not using social media platforms
Intervention	Use of social media marketing strategies, including platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp for brand promotion and customer engagement	Businesses without any social media presence or usage
Control	Comparative analysis between frequency of social media usage (often, sometimes, rarely) and business performance indicators	No comparative data or unclassified usage frequency
Outcome	Indicators such as increased visibility, customer engagement, revenue generation, sales performance, and business sustainability	Non-marketing related business performance metrics (e.g., operational costs, logistics efficiency)
Publication	Responses collected via structured questionnaire from participants who fully completed all sections; responses analyzed using SPSS and statistical methods	Incomplete questionnaires; invalid or duplicate entries

MATERIALS

Software

The primary software used in the study is IBM SPSS Version 25. This statistical software facilitated various analytical procedures, including coefficient analysis, multiple regression analysis, hypothesis testing, and descriptive statistics. The researchers employed IBM SPSS to summarize the collected data, assess the validity and reliability of their measurement instruments, evaluate linear relationships through Pearson's correlation coefficient, and identify influential variables via multiple regression analysis. The use of this software ensured precise and efficient processing of the data, enabling the researchers to draw meaningful insights about the impact of social media marketing on women-owned tourism businesses in Bali. By leveraging IBM SPSS, the study could systematically analyze complex relationships between variables, validate measurement tools, and confirm the significance of their findings, ultimately strengthening the robustness and credibility of the research conclusions.

METHOD

Quantitative Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design to systematically examine the influence of social media marketing on the sales performance of women-owned tourism businesses in Bali. This approach involved collecting numerical data through structured questionnaires, allowing the researchers to quantify relationships between key variables such as customer feedback, communication, content sharing, customer relations, and sales outcomes. By using statistical techniques, the design enabled the researchers to identify

patterns, measure the strength of associations, and test hypotheses objectively. This approach was chosen to provide measurable insights into how social media strategies correlate with and impact business performance in a specific context.

Sampling Method

The researchers utilized purposive sampling to specifically target women entrepreneurs operating in Bali's tourism sector who had experience with social media marketing. This non-probability sampling technique was applied to ensure that respondents possessed relevant insights into the variables being studied, thus enhancing the relevance and validity of the results. By deliberately selecting participants who met specific criteria, the study aimed to gather focused data reflective of the target population's experiences. The sample consisted of 175 valid respondents, collected over a three-week period, which facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between social media marketing practices and sales performance among women entrepreneurs.

Questionnaire Development

Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire divided into two main sections. The first section gathered demographic data such as age, domicile, business type, and social media usage frequency, providing context for the analysis. The second section assessed perceptions related to customer feedback, communication, content sharing, customer relations, and sales performance, using a five-point Likert scale. This instrument was developed based on insights from existing literature to ensure content validity. The use of standardized questions enabled consistent measurement of constructs, allowing for reliable and valid data collection necessary for subsequent statistical analysis.

Validity and Reliability Testing

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurements, the study conducted validity and reliability tests on the questionnaire instruments using IBM SPSS Version 25. Validity testing confirmed that the questions accurately represented the underlying concepts of social media marketing and sales performance, while reliability testing assessed the internal consistency of the scales. These procedures were critical for verifying that the data collected was both accurate and dependable, thereby strengthening the credibility of the subsequent statistical analysis and findings.

Statistical Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a combination of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression techniques. Descriptive statistics summarized respondent characteristics and response patterns, providing an overview of the data. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the linear relationships between social media marketing variables and sales performance. Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the extent to which each independent variable influenced sales outcomes, identifying key drivers within the social media strategy. Hypothesis testing through t-tests assessed the significance of these relationships, allowing the researchers to draw evidence-based conclusions about the effectiveness of social media marketing efforts for women entrepreneurs in Bali's tourism industry.

RESULTS

Table 2. Frequency of Social Media Marketing Usage

Frequency of Use	Number of Respondents (n)	Percentage (%)
Often	117	66.86%
Sometimes	50	28.57%
Regularly	5	2.86%
Rarely	3	1.71%

Table 3. Impact of Social Media Variables on Sales Performance

Variable	n	M (SD)	95% CI	Significance (p-value)
Customer Feedback	175	.63 (.12)	[.59, .67]	p < 0.01
Communication	175	.61 (.14)	[.56, .66]	p < 0.01
Content Sharing	175	.58 (.13)	[.54, .62]	p < 0.01
Customer Relationship	175	.65 (.11)	[.61, .69]	p < 0.01

Frequency of Social Media Marketing Usage

The survey of female entrepreneurs in Bali’s tourism sector shows that 66.86% frequently use social media to promote their businesses, indicating a strong reliance on digital platforms. Meanwhile, 28.57% use it occasionally, with only a small minority adopting regular or rare usage patterns. This distribution underscores the growing acceptance of social media as a critical marketing tool in the tourism industry.

Impact of Customer Feedback on Sales

Analysis reveals that customer feedback significantly influences sales performance, with a high mean score of 0.63 (SD = 0.12) and a 95% confidence interval of 0.59 to 0.67. The result is statistically significant (p < 0.01), confirming that positive and active feedback enhances purchase decisions and strengthens the reputation of women-led tourism businesses.

Effect of Social Media Communication on Sales

Communication via social media platforms also shows a strong impact on sales, with a mean score of 0.61 (SD = 0.14) and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.56 to 0.66. The statistical significance (p < 0.01) highlights the importance of interactive and personalized communication in building trust and loyalty, ultimately driving improved sales outcomes.

Role of Content Sharing in Sales Performance

Content sharing on social media significantly affects sales, with a mean score of 0.58 (SD = 0.13) and a 95% confidence interval of 0.54 to 0.62 (p < 0.01). This indicates that the quality, relevance, and timeliness of shared content are key in engaging customers and encouraging purchasing behavior among tourists.

Customer Relationship Management via Social Media

Customer relationship management through social media has the highest impact on sales, with a mean score of 0.65 (SD = 0.11) and a 95% confidence interval of 0.61 to 0.69 ($p < 0.01$). Maintaining positive, ongoing engagement with customers is the most influential factor in driving sustainable business growth for these entrepreneurs.

Overall Findings

The analysis demonstrates that all four dimensions of social media marketing—customer feedback, communication, content sharing, and customer relationships—significantly contribute to improved sales performance. These findings validate the strategic importance of effectively leveraging social media platforms to achieve business success in Bali's tourism sector.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illustrate the pivotal role social media marketing plays in enhancing the sales performance of female entrepreneurs in Bali's tourism industry. By demonstrating significant effects of customer feedback, communication, content sharing, and customer relationship management, the study extends current understanding of how digital platforms foster engagement and loyalty in small-scale tourism businesses (Sufian et al., 2020; Tajeddini et al., 2017). These results align with prior research suggesting that interactive and authentic communication through social media can effectively build trust and influence consumer behavior in tourism contexts (Leung et al., 2013; Raab et al., 2016).

However, the study acknowledges several limitations that may affect the interpretation of these results. The cross-sectional design captures data at a single point in time, which limits the ability to infer causality or observe long-term effects of social media strategies on sales performance. Moreover, the sample is geographically concentrated in Bali and largely composed of small businesses with limited employees, which may affect the generalizability of findings to other regions or larger enterprises (Sugiyono, 2014a). The reliance on self-reported questionnaire data also introduces potential biases, such as social desirability or inaccurate recall.

Despite these limitations, this research contributes valuable empirical evidence supporting the integration of social media marketing into strategic planning for women-led tourism ventures. It emphasizes the necessity for entrepreneurs to not only adopt social media platforms but to actively engage customers through responsive communication and relevant content sharing (Mishra, 2019; Woodside & Mir, 2019). From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that targeted training programs and marketing support focused on digital literacy could substantially improve competitive advantage and revenue growth for these businesses.

Policy implications from this study advocate for greater institutional support to empower women entrepreneurs through accessible digital tools and capacity-building initiatives. Encouraging hybrid business models that combine offline and online marketing may enhance market reach and resilience, especially amid evolving consumer behaviors accelerated by technological advancements (Susanto et al., 2021). Furthermore, collaborations between tourism authorities, educational institutions, and industry players can foster innovation ecosystems conducive to sustainable tourism development in Bali.

Future research should aim to address the gaps identified by employing longitudinal designs to monitor changes in social media effectiveness over time and to capture the dynamic nature of customer engagement. Expanding the study scope to include diverse geographic regions and varying business scales could improve the robustness and applicability of findings. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methods would enrich understanding of the nuanced experiences and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in leveraging social media for business success (Perez & Shah, 2022).

In conclusion, this study reinforces the transformative potential of social media marketing in empowering female entrepreneurs within Bali's tourism sector. By strategically leveraging customer feedback, communication, content sharing, and relationship management, women business owners can enhance visibility, foster loyalty, and drive sustainable growth. These insights lay the groundwork for future research and practical interventions aimed at strengthening digital entrepreneurship in emerging markets.

CONCLUSION

Social media marketing proves to be a vital catalyst for enhancing the sales performance of female entrepreneurs in Bali's tourism industry. Effective utilization of customer feedback, interactive communication, relevant content sharing, and robust customer relationship management significantly contribute to business growth and competitive positioning. These elements collectively enable women-led tourism businesses to connect authentically with their audience and foster sustained customer loyalty in a highly dynamic digital environment.

The dominance of younger entrepreneurs actively engaging with social media highlights a generational shift towards digital readiness, underscoring the importance of digital literacy and strategic online presence for long-term success. Despite operating mostly within small-scale and resource-limited frameworks, the adoption of hybrid business models—integrating both offline and online marketing channels—demonstrates adaptability and innovation that can overcome traditional market barriers.

Challenges related to limited budgets, geographic concentration, and data collection methods suggest the need for broader institutional support and capacity-building initiatives. Enhancing access to professional social media expertise and tailored training programs can empower women entrepreneurs to optimize their marketing efforts and scale their businesses more effectively within the competitive tourism sector.

Ultimately, leveraging social media marketing as a strategic tool offers promising pathways for economic empowerment and sustainable development in emerging tourism markets. Continued exploration of digital marketing dynamics and inclusive policy support will be essential to unlocking the full potential of women entrepreneurs, fostering resilience and growth in Bali and similar contexts worldwide.

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