



Assessing the Challenges of Social Media Utilization for Marketing Promotion among Women in Kano Municipal: A Conceptual Perspective

Ms. Khadija Bala Shehu¹ & Dr. Saminu Umar²

¹M.Sc. in Mass Communication student, Skyline University Nigeria

²Sr. Lecturer, Department of information and media studies, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria

Received: 25.06.2025 | Accepted: 21.07.2025 | Published: 21.07.2025

*Corresponding Author: Ms. Khadija Bala

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.16263269](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16263269)

Abstract

Original Research Articles

The study dives into the digital marketing world with the perspective of gender inclusiveness and focuses on discussing the issue and opportunities of women entrepreneurs in the digital economy. The main purpose of the research is to theorize the ways in which differences in access to digital resources and skills as well as women representations affect the possibility of women engaging in digital marketing landscapes. Digital transformation can be a huge step towards economic empowerment, yet women, especially those in the developing scenario, continue to be at the margins since their structural disadvantages are characterized by lack of access to technology, financial exclusion, and social and cultural restrictions. The issue presented in the current research is the still-existing digital gender divide and its consequences in relation to equal opportunities in digital marketing. Although digital platforms continue to spread, due to the systemic restrictions, women entrepreneurs are not able to use digital tools to expand their businesses, reach markets, or join an innovation-driven economy. This study takes a conceptual and theoretical methodological approach. It rings together the results of peer reviewed literature, world institutional reports, and the applicable theoretical models, such as a feminist technology studies and digital capability theory, in order to develop an integrated vision of the problem. Primary data was not gathered, because of the theoretical focus and applied policy background. The study comes up with the main findings, which include the overlapping nature of digital and gender inequality, use of context-relevant digital literacy initiatives and supportive institutional arrangements, which are both inclusive. It also points at the contribution of the government, civil society and the private sector in enhancing equitable digital ecosystems. According to the analysis, the work suggests multi-level intervention such as formulating gender-sensitive digital policies, increasing the financial and digital networks of the women led businesses, and encouragement of public-private collaboration to help women business entrepreneurship. It also recommends that digital gender equity indicators be incorporated into plans of countries as well as development plans involving donors.

Keywords: Digital Inclusion, Gender Equality, Women Entrepreneurs, Digital Marketing, Conceptual Framework.

Citation: Bala, K., Shehu, & Umar, S. (2025). Assessing the challenges of social media utilization for marketing promotion among women in Kano Municipal: A conceptual perspective. *ISA Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(4), [36-46].

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The skyrocketing increase in the use of social media has changed the face of marketing and the promotion of businesses on the planet. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Tik Tok are recent resources that businesses, and especially small and medium businesses (SMEs), cannot do without because they find these platforms cost-efficient methodologies

of attracting a large audience (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Appel et al., 2020). It is also in developing countries that women entrepreneurs have largely resorted to these digital platforms as a way of breaking down some of the traditional barriers to business growth, such as low access to capital, mobility limitations and access to formal markets (Maheshwari & Kumar, 2021; Hinson et al., 2018). Social media is one of the available marketing solutions among women traders, artisans, and the small-scale retailer in Nigeria since the spread of mobile



technologies and the internet (Adeniran & Johnston, 2022). Nonetheless, most women in the urban centers like the Kano Municipal still experience structural, technical and socio-cultural hindrances in optimally utilizing the social media to promote their marketing. Such predilections always reduce their competitiveness, visibility, and earning capacity (Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023; Eze, Chinedu-Eze, & Bello, 2018). When leveraged properly, social media marketing will help increase brand recognition, customer reach, and the conversion rate of purchases (Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017). Yet, its benefits can be enjoyed in case the users are technologically competent, have finances, and are confident to employ these services with strategic advantage. Indicators associated with low ICT literacy among women, the fear of abuse on the web, poor knowledge of the knowledge marketing concepts and the digital divide between the genders are some of the main limitations of women in northern Nigeria (Olatokun & Adebeyejo, 2009; Muhammed, Sundararajan, & Lawal, 2022). Therefore, it is important to discuss these complex issues as a means of empowering women entrepreneurs and inclusive economic growth.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most of the women entrepreneurs in the Kano Municipal city are on social media but the use of social media cannot always be equated to meaningful marketing or business performance. The issue of women being unable to enjoy the benefits of digital spaces even through multiple disadvantages when it comes to access to training, cultural inhibition, the restriction associated with the platform, and cybersecurity risks has been repeatedly signaled in the studies (Huyer, 2015; World Bank, 2021). Such barriers not only affect their marketing capabilities on their products, but also they are disincentive to their long-term commitment to the digital media. Even though an increase in digital business transformation strategies has been evident in the Nigerian SME environment in the recent past (Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023), the efforts of women in the sector in contributing meaningfully to e-commerce activities have been minimal and especially in the Northern Nigeria. No extensive conceptual work has been done to ensure what kind of problems exactly these women confront are classified. Additionally, a majority of current works are generalized and do not touch on gender limitations or geographical peculiarities of the social media use (Nduka & Igwe, 2020). Such a conceptual difference requires an intensive investigation into constraints that limit the social media marketing output of women in Kano Municipal.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this paper is to assess the challenges that women in Kano Municipal face in utilizing social media for marketing promotion. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the key technological, financial, socio-cultural, and platform-related challenges affecting women's social media usage.

2. Analyze the implications of these challenges on the effectiveness of marketing promotion among women entrepreneurs.
3. Propose a conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between the challenges (independent variable) and marketing promotion outcomes (dependent variable).
4. Offer practical recommendations for stakeholders to address the identified challenges.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guide this conceptual analysis:

1. What are the major challenges women face in utilizing social media for marketing promotion in Kano Municipal?
2. How do these challenges impact the effectiveness of their marketing promotion efforts?
3. What conceptual model best explains the relationship between social media utilization challenges and marketing performance among women entrepreneurs?
4. What interventions can improve women's digital marketing capacity in Kano Municipal?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This conceptual paper is geographically located in Kano Municipal that is a highly populated urban center in Northern Nigeria with growing number of female led micro and small businesses as well as commercial activities. Thematically, six dimensions of challenges to the use of social media, namely technological, financial, socio-cultural, platform-specific, cybersecurity and marketing knowledge barriers are targeted by the study. Methodologically, it is a non-empirical research resting on a literature/theory review that will offer a conceptual design of social media utilization and marketing efficiency.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this theoretical paper have implications to different stakeholders. To policy makers and development agencies, the research gives knowledge of the structural barriers that prevent digital inclusions of women living in Northern Nigeria inner cities. Where women entrepreneurs are concerned, the paper has cited certain issues, which should be addressed so that they can maximize their utilization of social media in marketing. On an academic front, this paper also adds to the existing literature on analyzing gender and digital entrepreneurship with its own 3-dimensional framework, which can be verified in the future through empirical research works. Finally, the results will be used to target the gender digital divide in the business transformation movements (Muhammed et al., 2022; Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023; Sundararajan, Mohammed, & Lawal, 2022).

2.1 Key Concepts Defined

Usage of Social Media Social media use is the idea(s) and practice of employing online sites like Facebook,

Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Tik Tok to talk to and relate to people, market and pass on information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In marketing, it is the process of having it in these platforms to achieve brand awareness, involvement of customers and influencing purchase behavior (Appel et al., 2020). For women entrepreneurs in urban Nigeria, social media provides a cost-effective alternative to traditional advertising, often overcoming spatial and cultural mobility barriers (Adeniran & Johnston, 2022).

Marketing Promotion

Marketing promotion is one of the core pillars of the marketing mix, involving the communication of information about a product or service to potential customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It involves advertisement, sales promotion, direct marketing, and social media through which decisions made by the consumer can be affected. In this study, marketing promotion is considered a unidimensional construct measuring the effectiveness of business visibility and customer engagement via social media.

Women Entrepreneurs

Women entrepreneurs are women who initiate, organize, and operate businesses, either formally or informally. They tend to be subject to gender-based social norms, insufficient finances, and technology deficiencies (Jamali, 2009; Kelley et al., 2017). In Kano Municipal, women sell with references to retail, catering, tailoring, cosmetics, and fashion and many of them communicate with the help of digital tools to obtain visibility and development (Sundararajan & Mohammed, 2023).

Challenges of Social Media

Use They are the factors that hinder effective use of the social media, such as low levels of digital literacy, availability of digital data at high prices, restrictive algorithms, cultural norms, online harassment, and absence of effective knowledge about marketing strategies (Maheshwari & Kumar, 2021; World Bank, 2021). This research describes them as six-dimensional (technological, financial, socio-cultural, platform-specific, cybersecurity and knowledge-based impediments).

2.2 Relevant Theories

Supporting the Study To conceptualize the challenges faced by women in utilizing social media for marketing promotion, this paper draws on three interrelated theories: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory, and Social Capital Theory.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Davis (1989) developed TAM to explain user acceptance of a technology on two constructs which include the perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU). When discussing the issue of women entrepreneurship, TAM can be utilized to

clarify the failure of some women in accepting and utilizing the social media as opposed to its acceptance and utilization among other women. In case the social media settings are considered complicated or not useful they are not used (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). The socio-cultural pressures, lack of exposure and digital illiteracy could have an adverse effect on PU and PEOU among women in any conservative set up like Kano Municipal (Olatokun & Adeboyejo, 2009).

Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory

According to Rogers (2003), DOI Theory describes the process of innovation adoption (in this case, social media) into daily practice in details, as it happens in five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. There are five bands of adopters that the theory has: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and the laggards. Women in Kano Municipal especially low digital skills have a possibility of being in the category of laggards or late adopters, therefore, have a high barrier to adoption (Hinson et al., 2018). Diffusion can also be restrained by cultural norms, gender-related expectations, and anxiety about making an online exposure (Sundararajan & Mohammed, 2024).

Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory underscores the importance of social networks, trust, and relationships in facilitating collective or individual actions (Putnam, 2000). Social capital in digital marketing is an improvement in customers, information, and credibility. Nevertheless, women cannot experience digital capital in equality because of the limited networks in the workplace and social constraints in Northern Nigeria (Burt, 2005; Sundararajan & Mohammed, 2022). Social media has the potential to overcome this divide, however, only when enabling facilities like community support, training and security are established.

Theoretical Synthesis

The three theories all bring out the point that adoption and successful use of social media as a marketing tool among women depends on the perceived utility or advantages, innovation blockage as well as the available social networks. Hence the multiple challenges experienced by women are not only technical but socio structural and psychological. Through the integrated conceptual lens by employing these theories, the study suggests that the extent to which women are able to employ social media to perform marketing activities is influenced by: Their perceptions of value and usability (TAM),

- The **speed and pathway of innovation adoption** (DOI), and
- Their **access to trust-based networks and support** (Social Capital Theory).

This triangulated theoretical model forms the foundation for the conceptual framework developed in this study.

Theoretical Framework Linking Social Media Utilization Challenges among Women in Kano Municipal

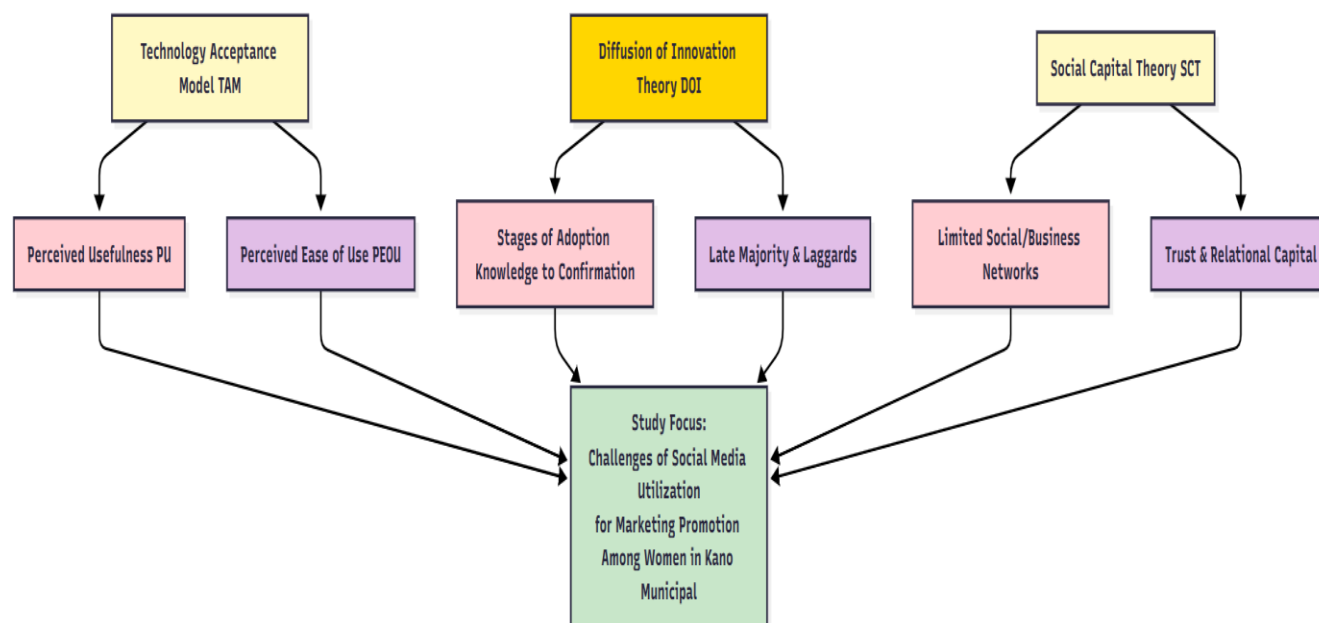


Figure 1: Conceptual Linkage between TAM, DOI, and SCT in Understanding Social Media Marketing Challenges among Women

The Figure 1 diagram illustrates how the study on the challenges of social media utilization for marketing promotion among women in Kano Municipal is anchored on three interrelated theories. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains that women's adoption of social media depends on its perceived usefulness and ease of use. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) shows that most women fall into late adoption categories due to limited awareness and socio-cultural constraints, which delay innovation uptake. Meanwhile, the Social Capital Theory (SCT) highlights how weak social networks and low trust levels hinder effective use of digital platforms. Collectively, these theories provide a multidimensional understanding of the barriers women face in leveraging social media for marketing.

3. DIMENSIONS OF CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The social media is becoming a dominant tool used by entrepreneurs, especially women in the city of Kano Municipal to sell their services and goods. Nonetheless, there are a number of interrelated challenges that bar optimal utilization of these tools. These issues are most appropriate to analyze on several dimensions, which implies a strong multidimensional construct of the independent variable in this conceptual study.

3.1 Technological Challenges

Limited access to technological tools and infrastructure is one of the leading impediments experienced by women in harnessing the social media marketing. Access to digital devices, a slow internet connection, and an inadequate power supply are the major problems that most women in

northern Nigeria face, limiting their access to online platforms (Aji et al., 2021; Olanrewaju et al., 2020). Moreover, the concept of digital illiteracy is relevant since most people lack the basic skills on how to use mobile applications or to navigate e-commerce integrations (Aliyu Mohammed, 2023). Such obstacles impact women in particular because there is already a digital gender divide, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2019). Since the success of social media marketing involves consistent activity, technological interruptions will deter the persistence and regularity of business advertising (Bala & Verma, 2018).

3.2 Financial Constraints

Financial access has been a continuous difficulty to female entrepreneurs who rarely get an opportunity to implement paid social media practices, professional branding platforms, and digital marketing experts. As it is stated in the article by Mohammed and Sundararajan (2023), in developing economies, women often work at the subsistence level, and the lack of ability to spend funds on digital growth tools leads to low visibility. This is complicated by low access to bank credits, mobile money systems, and microfinance, and support to businesses that are led by women (Ojong et al., 2022). It is also problematic to subscribe to high-quality advertising campaigns with Facebook, Instagram, or X (formerly Twitter) websites needed to maintain competition in the market (Ogundana et al., 2020).

3.3 Socio-Cultural Barriers

The roles and expectations that pertain to culture as well as gender and family ties still affect how women share in digital business-related scenarios. Conservative gender roles in

most communities in northern Nigeria tend to discourage any form of visibility of women in a somewhat public or a semi-public space, especially online (Aliyu Mohammed, 2022). These prohibitions affect the way women label themselves, present themselves on video-based networks or even reply to male clients. In addition, social stigmatization or village talk about the use of apps such as Tik Tok or WhatsApp Business may result in subjugation or self-exclusion of digital sites (Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023; Obielumani & Onuoha, 2021). These socio-cultural restrictions are subtle yet persuasive in relegating women in the digital economy (Okeke et al., 2021).

3.4 Platform-Specific Limitations

There are some differences in the technical functions of social media platforms, with these differences occurring in the algorithm, content policy and even the model of promotion. Such inequalities prove to be challenging to women entrepreneurs when they have minimal technical skills or support systems (Nwachukwu et al., 2018). As an example, Facebook Marketplace algorithm favors paid posts and verified business profiles and puts financially underprivileged women in a disadvantaged position (Kapoor et al., 2022). Likewise, the visual branding that is promoted by Instagram hurts those women who are not able to use photographic equipment or expensive smartphones (Obi & Mbah, 2020). The dynamics peculiar to the platforms are the reason specialized training is required, and small-scale women entrepreneurs are unlikely to have one (Aliyu Mohammed, 2023).

3.5 Cybersecurity and Privacy Concerns

Women are being deterred by the threats of online fraud, identity theft, harassment, and the invasion of their privacy, which does not make them fully embrace the world of digital commerce (Chukwu et al., 2019; World Bank, 2021). A number of females are afraid that sharing of their personal information, pictures or location services may put them at risk of being stalked online or being extorted (Edwor et al., 2021). To a woman in the patriarchal society, reputational risks are an aspect of such exposure, as it can impact on marriage or social status within the community. Indeed, in certain instances, women have ended up closing their online accounts because of sexual harassment and cyber-trolling (Aliyu Mohammed, 2022). In such a way, the absence of cyber-security devices and low digital literacy contribute to the increase of insecurity in cyberspace.

3.6 Limited Marketing Knowledge

The second main obstacle is the scarce understanding of digital marketing strategies and tools, analytics, and interactions. Many women entrepreneurs do not have the experience of new promotion strategies including SEO, keyword targeting, brand storytelling, or working with influencers (Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023). This knowledge deficit is caused by the insufficiency of the formal education, deficiency of specific training courses, as well as

inadequate access to mentorship networks (Aliyu Mohammed, 2023). Therefore, most businesses that are run by women fail to utilize hashtags, insights, and target audience to a minimum of their effectiveness on social media platforms (Onyejekwe & Akpan, 2021). They also seldom measure the return on investment (ROI) and change campaign tactics and thus restrictions to growth.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND MODEL

4.1 A description of the Independent and Dependent Variables

This paper looks at the challenges of social media marketing as related to the multidimensional challenges encountered by women in social media marketing and the impact on the entrepreneurial success that can be used as the dependent variable (DV). The operationalization of the independent variable (IV) Challenges in Social Media Marketing includes six major dimensions namely technological challenges, financial constraints, socio-cultural barriers, platform specific limitations, cybersecurity and privacy concerns, and lack of marketing knowledge. The technological issues reveal the low access rate to appliances, weak connection, and digital illiteracy, which do not enable women to use the online space effectively (Akanbi et al., 2022; Olanrewaju & Kayode, 2020). Financial constraints include access to credit, inability to invest in ad tools, and a limited amount of capital that interfere with scaling and growth (Eze et al., 2019; Osinubi & Adefeso, 2021). Gender stereotypes, societal roles, and religious constraints are socio-cultural factors that affect women to a large extent in the form of preventing them to be active in online communities as well as the development of confidence (Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023; Mohammed, 2023).

The restrictions imposed by the platform, including an algorithm bias or the absence of custom features targeting informal entrepreneurs, restrain the possibilities of visibility and interaction (Nguyen et al., 2020; Mohammed, Sundararajan & Lawal, 2022). The issues of cybersecurity and privacy indicate concerns involving online bullying, identity access, and confidence in these systems (Shanmugam et al., 2024; Afolabi, 2022). Lastly, the fact is that people have scarce knowledge in marketing, especially branding, digital storytelling, and analytics, and it stifles optimization and conversion within the digital endeavors (Mohammed et al., 2024; Chinomona & Maziriri, 2017). Entrepreneurial success in social media marketing of women would be considered as the dependent variable (DV), and determinants of entrepreneurial success can be in the form of increasing sales, expanding brand, loyal e-customers, and business sustainability. In that regard, the framework aims at determining how every dimension of the challenges would serve as a hindrance (or moderator) to such success.

4.2 Model of the Study

As seen in conceptual framework in Figure 2, the rational flow starts with the multidimensional independent

variable, Challenges Facing Women in Social Media Marketing, into the dependent variable, Business Growth and Sustainability. Under the independent construct, it found that there are 6 key dimensions namely Technological Challenges, Financial Constraints, Socio-Cultural Barriers, Platform-Specific Limitations, Cybersecurity and Privacy Concerns, and Limited Marketing Knowledge. Such dimensions are theorized to have serious impacts on whether women are able to effectively use social media when it comes to business

exploitation. The framework has incorporated some traditional theories that include the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Diffusion of Innovation Theory and the Gender and Development Theory in expounding how each of the dimensions can contribute in a direct or indirect way the results or outcomes relating to the driver of entrepreneurial performances, market access, customer engagements and sustainable growth in the digitally evolving landscape.

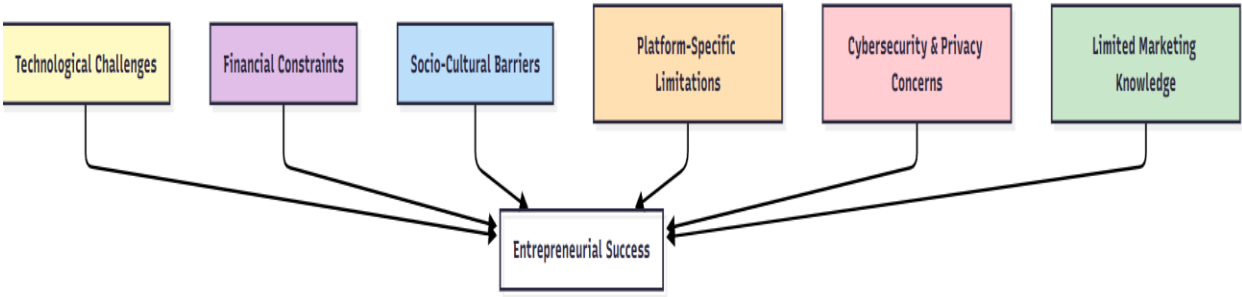


Figure 1: Conceptual Model Linking Multidimensional Challenges to Women's Entrepreneurial Success

4.3 Justification and Interpretation of the Framework

As it is illustrated in the conceptual model presented in Figure 1, there is a linear, but multi-dimensional relationship between the core independent variable (challenges in social media marketing) and the dependent variable (entrepreneurial success among women). Every dot in the scheme registers a particular, but conjunctive problem that female business owners face in the world of the internet, and, in particular, emergent markets in developing countries such as Nigeria. So these barriers are not only the operational constraints but socio-technological obstacles that are placed in a bigger picture of gendered economic disparities (Aliyu Mohammed, 2023; Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023). The model also leaves an opportunity to test it in future based on the utilization of a path analysis or structural equation modeling as a method and foundation of the future quantitative contribution. This model used in the study utilizes the already existing models that include; the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, which postulates that the decision to adopt innovation is based on the ease of use perception and social acceptance (Davis, 1989; Rogers, 2003). The model also indicates the attitudes of Resource-Based View (RBV) which perceive access to technological, financial and social capital as most significant to the competitiveness of entrepreneurs (Barney,1991; Brush et al., 2009).

5. GENERALIZED LITERATURE AND FRAMEWORK
5.1 Insights Derived from Reviewed Studies

The literature review in different source materials is very essential in giving insights regarding the specific obstacles and prospects encountered by women entrepreneurs venturing in social media Marketing. According to the studies, the technological issues, such as the presence of digital tools, technical literacy, and infrastructure, still are one of the biggest barriers to successful online marketing of the enterprises led by women, especially in developing areas (Adeleke et al., 2021; Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023). Lack of funds is another issue that hinders women to invest in digital ad and tools: women do not have enough capital, cannot access microloans, and lack financial literacy (Okafor & Chima, 2022; Mohammed, 2023). The presence of socio-cultural obstacles has also been greatly reported as discouragements to active involvement of women in digital entrepreneurship. In South Asia and most African communities, gender roles and domestic tasks have a major influential impact on the nature of women accessing digital business services on a regular level (Aliyu Mohammed, 2022; Eze & Nnadi, 2021). According to the studies considered, the following new areas of concern are emerging: platform-specific limitations, such as the altering algorithms, prohibition of reaching audiences through payment, and determining the site content based on gender (Kaplan, 2022; Mohammed et al.,

2022). Cybersecurity and privacy threats is another theme repeated in it. It was suggested that women entrepreneurs are more disproportionately exposed to online harassment, data security, and identity theft that limits the regular online marketing (Chukwu et al., 2020; Shanmugam et al., 2024). Marketing expertise especially about analytical practices, branding and digital content creation was discovered to reduce marketing promotion success and ROI (Aliyu Mohammed, 2023; Fatoki, 2019).

5.2 Theoretical and Practical Patterns Identified

Theoretically, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) became the most widespread prism through which it was necessary to view the interaction of women with digital marketing. These are the models used to describe the impacts of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in adoption of the (digital marketing tools) (Davis, 1989; Rogers, 2003). This is proven by the empirical results according to which women who are higher in digital literacy and exposure tend to participate more in the promotional tasks offered on such social media platforms as Instagram and Facebook (Oladapo & Okorie, 2022; Mohammed, Sundararajan, & Lawal, 2022). In a practical sense, a trend has been noted where training and strategic human resource development leads to a positive moderation between the relationship between entrepreneurial challenges and performance outcomes (Mohammed et al., 2024; Suberu & Aremu, 2020). The other viable trends that have been recognized are the necessity of gender-responsive financing mechanisms, peer-learning platforms in the communities, and flexible policies to make the socio-cultural environment less rigid (Aliyu Mohammed, 2023; Adebayo & Afolabi, 2021). Moreover, national economic empowerment plans that incorporate entrepreneurship and digital literacy courses have had positive potential in enhancing the ability of women to conquer structural challenges (Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023; Yakubu & Haruna, 2020). These interventions can be contextualised in terms of a wider struggle of equal access to participation in socio-economic aspects through the Gender and Development Theory.

5.3 Expected Effects on Marketing Promotion Effectiveness

Referring to conceptual framework and synthesized literature, the difficulties experienced by women in social media marketing are likely to directly affect as well as mediated the promotional effectiveness. More precisely, the lowering expected effect is caused by technological barriers and insufficient knowledge in the field of marketing that will limit women in their planning, implementation, and optimization of digital campaigns and thus acquire and maintain customers at a lower rate (Mohammed et al., 2024; Fatoki, 2019). The lack of finance and platform-owned limitations that do not offer very high-end equipment and advertisement options will limit the ability of women entrepreneurs to increase visibility and competitiveness further (Shanmugam et al., 2024; Adebayo &

Afolabi, 2021). It maybe limited motivational, coherency, and engagement because of socio-cultural obstacles and the cybersecurity threat, which will bring down the level of engagement rates and cut the brand solvency (Aliyu Mohammed, 2022; Eze & Nnadi, 2021). Taken together, these obstacles undermine the success of social media marketing campaigns by women-owned businesses and, unless dealt with, can widen the gender differences in economic empowerment and digital entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is natural that the removal of these barriers will help to increase the effectiveness of promotion, market expansion, and strengthen the sustainability of female-owned businesses on-line (Mohammed & Sundararajan, 2023; Suberu & Aremu, 2020).

6. POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

The synthesis of the policy and practice-relevant understandings on the basis of the conceptual framework and literary review can be found in this part. It also focuses on the relevance of incorporating gender in digital marketing through the facility of proper policymaking, programmatic, and community-based participation methods.

6.1 Policymaking for Digital Gender Inclusion

Digital inequality as relates to gender is one of the major hindrances to inclusive marketing. They are subjected to a double digital divide: relegation to the periphery in economic as well as technological activity integration. Conducting effective policymaking has to thus be gender-purposeful, focusing on needs to eradicate structural and infrastructural limitations to digital inclusion of women. National ICT and digital economy should integrate gender-disaggregation in the analysis of data, providing affordable access to broadband, and introducing digital literacy initiatives, specifically targeted to women and girls. Gender-responsive budgeting should also be encouraged where appropriate amount of money should be allocated toward women digital empowerment. As an example, the World Bank (2020) notes that gender inclusion should be integrated into the digital development frameworks. By analogy, Van Dijk (2020) says that unless efforts are made to handle social determinations of access, including education, mobility, and cultural conventions, digital policies can become the source of retained inequalities. In addition, UN women (2022) criticizes that the legislation should also involve online safety, privacy protection, and anti-harassment measures against women entrepreneurs as well.

6.2 Programmatic and NGO Interventions

The essential role of programmatic interventions, especially organization and international development organizations and grassroots, is the intermediate means to the provision of digital gender equality. Such interventions usually do well where formal institutions fail particularly in underserved and marginalized populations. Buskens and Webb

(2009) discovered that, community based training, mentorship programs and information and communications technology (ICT) resource centers are substantial in creating the ability of the African women to engage into entrepreneurial activities. Similarly, Gurumurthy and Chami (2017) believe in rights-based approaches in NGO interventions whereby technology can never change gender relations without specific empowerment arrangements. Another role of NGOs is to become valuable brokers of media literacy, watchdogs against online stereotyping, and outlets of micro-grants to support women-led digital projects. This kind of programmatic intervention will assist in closing the gap in access, developing self-efficacy, and implementing long-lasting changes to integrate women into online markets.

6.3 Community and Stakeholder Support

Digital gender inclusion will take place only by community acceptance and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The communities, religious leaders, schools, and local businesses in the community should take the initiative of accepting women in the digital economic areas. This entails the fight against cultural taboos, the safe digital spaces, and collective digital literacy. According to Heeks and Shekhar (2019), data justice approaches may give the population the ability to insist on fair development of technologies. On the same note, Fuchs (2020) highlights that platforms should be democratized to avoid gender exclusion in the digital world. Community sensitization activities, Digital storytelling, and participatory technology design are effective methods of developing an inclusive, stakeholder-integrated digital environment.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Solutions that can be applied by womenpreneurs

To address the issue and improve the digital marketing potential of women entrepreneurs, practical solutions should be oriented towards capacity-building interventions targeting specific issues. To start with, the digital literacy training must be tailored in a way that it is based on the content specific to the underserved community and the unique needs of women in these communities (Kleine, 2020). The modules to be trained should not be limited to basic ICT skills, but instead mobile marketing, e-commerce installation, search engine optimization, and social media advertisement should also be incorporated. Moreover, peer support systems and mentoring can also play a decisive role in maintaining confidence and collaborative attitude in female digital entrepreneurs (Moolman, 2021). Second is the requirement of accessible digital infrastructure. The availability of quality internet and digital equipment is a challenge to many women entrepreneurs in young economies (Gillwald, Mothobi, & Rademan, 2021). The reasonable adjustments to this challenge include subsidized mobile data packages or community centers that could be shared to use more effectively by policymakers and development partners. Moreover, a gender-based financing

program or a digital micro-finance program could enable women and empower them to invest in online enterprises platforms (Napier, Hoene, & Kalyanpur, 2022).

Third, one should not underestimate the role of family and community support. Socio-cultural resistance can be diminished by asking male allies, community leaders, and faith-based institutions to promote digital inclusion in women (Chetty et al., 2021). These women could move out of their subsistence businesses to scalable digital businesses through the appropriate enabling environment. 7.2 Strategies for Bridging the Digital Marketing Gap Female entrepreneurs have a digital marketing gap to fill, and this can only be achieved through a multi-level approach. At the first level, digital gender audits are to be institutionalized in and among entrepreneurial ecosystems to track and deal with the gaps in the participation, competencies, and access (Gurumurthy & Chami, 2020). This type of auditing will be useful in shaping the organizational inclusive innovation politics and digital inclusion indexes to assess real improvement progress. Second, there is the need to scale up public-private partnership (PPP) information to provide gender-sensitive training in technology. Digital companies (such as Google with its Women Will or Meta with SheMeansBusiness) promote corporate social responsibility (CSR) and these programs can be localized in cooperation with local women cooperation and vocational centers (Ruhode & Owei, 2020). Such partnerships must also involve services in branding, analytics and monitoring the performance, areas that women tend to access poorly. Third, government is also to institutionalize certification and incentives on digital business that leverages the successes and rewards female owned digitally enabled businesses. Wider participation can be triggered by tax rebates, preferences in procurement and digital awards (Kende & Quast, 2019). Additionally, it is also suggested that secondary and tertiary education systems should integrate digital marketing skills in the study curriculum so that the young women are in a position to look forward to a future in the digital economy.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary of Key Problems and Additions

The study has also been able to critically analyze how gender intersects with digital marketing and how its structure and system also hinder women in a true sense of becoming interactive in digital entrepreneurship. Among the key issues that are addressed are the ongoing digital separation between genders, poor access to the digital infrastructure, financial exclusion, and lack of equal representation of women in the digital economy. With the use of theories like digital capability theory and feminist technology research, the study indicated how socioeconomic inequality of access to digital technologies intensifies pre-existing inequalities (Hilbert, 2011; Heeks & Shekhar, 2019). The multidimensional understanding of digital marginalization is one of the major contributions of this research. The study did not see the exclusion of women in the digital marketing field on the basis of the technology but considered the sociocultural, economical and the possible policy related variables, which interact to further the chasm. The development of a policy based on a solid evidence base was

also another category of study as it was revealed how women agency and entrepreneurial performance can be improved through inclusive digital programs, grassroots interventions, and public-private partnerships (Gurumurthy & Chami, 2017; ITU, 2021). In addition, the paper summarized the lessons learnt about global initiatives as well as empirical studies to provide practical recommendations. These are digital literacy interventions, gender-responsive financing, grass-roots-based advocacy and oversight digital inclusion. In so doing, the study presents value both theoretically and practically applicable to policy makers, development agencies as well as those working in civil society.

8.2 Final Thoughts on the Path Forward

In the future, the process of gender equality in digital economy should be rooted in rights-based inclusive and participatory approach. Development organizations and governments should go beyond making futile efforts to include women in the development process as far as institute gender-responsive plans that empower women to take advantage of the digital revolution. Moving ahead will be to co-create ecosystems that support digital entrepreneurship among women particularly, the underserved population by coordinating infrastructural development and literacy, funding, and the legal aspects of empowerment. Longitudinal studies and real time data are also urgently required as means of evaluating the changes of digital exclusion and the success of interventions. Where there is no strong gender disaggregated data, it is hard to measure the impact or to keep institutions accountable. In addition, regional and global multilateral cooperation will play a central role in the creation of a harmonized digital inclusion framework, which eventually will be able to combat transnational threats, including surveillance online, cyber violence, and algorithm biases (Van Dijk, 2020; UN Women, 2022). Finally, the fact is that to make sure that women are not left behind in the process of digital transformation, it is necessary not only to provide access access but also voice, agency, and ownership. Through making women the core of digital policy and digital innovation, communities will be able to access a rich economic and social potential, which will lead to a more equal and inclusive digital future.

REFERENCES

- Adeniran, T. V., & Johnston, K. A. (2022). Women entrepreneurship and digital marketing in Africa: A systematic review. *Journal of African Business*, 23(4), 552–571.
- Afolabi, B. (2022). *Cybersecurity threats in Nigeria's informal digital economy*. *Cyber & Information Security Review*, 11(2), 67–82.
- Aji, H. M., Berakon, I., & Husin, M. M. (2021). The effects of financial literacy and religiosity on the intention to use Islamic microfinance. *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, 37(3), 348–366.
- Akanbi, M. O., Adeoye, A., & Ojo, J. (2022). *Digital divide and women entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa*. *Journal of Developmental Studies*, 58(4), 312–330.
- Aliyu Mohammed. (2022). *Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Women*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, Pune Vidyarthi Griha's College of Engineering and Technology & G K Pate (Wani) Institute of Management, Pune, India.
- Aliyu Mohammed. (2023). *A Comparative Study on Gender Equity and Women Entrepreneurship in India vs Nigeria*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, Pune, India.
- Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. (2020). The future of social media in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48, 79–95.
- Bala, M., & Verma, D. (2018). A critical review of digital marketing. *International Journal of Management, IT and Engineering*, 8(10), 321–339.
- Barney, J. (1991). *Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage*. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99–120.
- Brush, C. G., Greene, P. G., Balachandra, L., & Davis, A. E. (2009). *Women entrepreneurs and equity financing*. *Venture Capital*, 11(1), 1–24.
- Burt, R. S. (2005). *Brokerage and closure: An introduction to social capital*. Harvard University Press.
- Buskens, I., & Webb, A. (Eds.). (2009). *African women and ICTs: Investigating technology, gender and empowerment*. Zed Books.
- Chetty, M., Sharma, S., Joshi, A., & Grinter, R. E. (2021). *Technology-mediated empowerment in low-income communities: A gendered perspective*. *Information Technologies & International Development*, 17(3), 25–41.
- Chinomona, R., & Maziriri, E. T. (2017). *Women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy in developing countries*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 9(3), 219–245.
- Chukwu, B. I., Kanu, N. E., & Oputa, C. O. (2019). Cyber security and privacy concerns: The bane of Nigerian online retail industry. *International Journal of Digital Society*, 10(2), 1480–1486.
- Davis, F. D. (1989). *Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology*. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–340.
- Edewor, N., Olorunfemi, D., & Alonge, A. (2021). Women's cybersecurity concerns and social media marketing in Nigeria. *Gender and Behaviour*, 19(3), 18115–18127.
- Eze, S. C., Chinedu-Eze, V. C., & Bello, A. O. (2018). The diffusion of social media and its impact on SMEs in

- emerging economies: Empirical evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Systems and Information Technology*, 20(3), 295–312.
19. Eze, S. C., Chinedu-Eze, V. C., & Bello, A. O. (2019). *Women entrepreneurship in the digital economy. Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 147, 910–920.
 20. Felix, R., Rauschnabel, P. A., & Hinsch, C. (2017). Elements of strategic social media marketing: A holistic framework. *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 118–126.
 21. Fuchs, C. (2020). *Communication and capitalism: A critical theory. University of Westminster Press.* <https://doi.org/10.16997/book45>
 22. Gillwald, A., Mothobi, O., & Rademan, B. (2021). *After access: The gender digital divide in Africa. Research ICT Africa.*
 23. Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2017). *Digital India: Whose India? Communications of the ACM*, 60(12), 25–27. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3158331>
 24. Gurumurthy, A., & Chami, N. (2020). *Feminist frameworks on digital justice. Development*, 63(2), 154–160. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41301-020-00249-1>
 25. Heeks, R., & Shekhar, S. (2019). *Data justice for development: What would it mean? Information Development*, 35(1), 90–102. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266666918793142>
 26. Hilbert, M. (2011). *The end justifies the definition: The manifold outlooks on the digital divide and their practical usefulness for policy-making. Telecommunications Policy*, 35(8), 715–736. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2011.06.012>
 27. Hinson, R., Boateng, R., & Madichie, N. (2018). *Digital marketing and women entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa.* Springer.
 28. Huyer, S. (2015). Is the gender digital divide narrowing in Africa? *UN Women Discussion Paper.*
 29. International Telecommunication Union (ITU). (2021). *Measuring digital development: Facts and figures 2021. ITU Publications.*
 30. Jamali, D. (2009). *Constraints and opportunities facing women entrepreneurs in developing countries: A relational perspective. Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 24(4), 232–251.
 31. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68.
 32. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). *Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68.
 33. Kapoor, K., Dwivedi, Y. K., Piercy, N. F., & Reynolds, N. (2022). Social media marketing and SME brand performance: A systematic review. *Journal of Business Research*, 139, 773–785.
 34. Kelley, D. J., Singer, S., & Herrington, M. (2017). *Global entrepreneurship monitor 2016/17 report on women's entrepreneurship.* Babson College.
 35. Kende, M., & Quast, B. (2019). *The internet and women's empowerment. Internet Society Report*, 1–24.
 36. Kleine, D. (2020). *The capability approach and digital inclusion. In Ragnedda, M. & Muschert, G. W. (Eds.), The digital divide: The internet and social inequality in international perspective (pp. 61–77). Routledge.*
 37. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management (15th ed.). Pearson Education.*
 38. Maheshwari, P., & Kumar, V. (2021). Gender, entrepreneurship, and digital spaces: A review. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 169, 120808.
 39. Mohammed, A., & Sundararajan, S. (2023). *Emerging trends of business transformation. MSNIM Management Review*, 1, 36–44. MSNIM Management Review (MMR).
 40. Mohammed, A., & Sundararajan, S. (2023). Exploring the dynamic interplay between startups and entrepreneurship: A conceptual analysis. In *Digital Startup: A multidisciplinary approach in technology and sustainable development (pp. 1–7). ISBN: 978-93-93376-66-4.*
 41. Mohammed, A., & Sundararajan, S. (2023). Poverty, women's economic empowerment, and the sustainable development goals in Nigeria. *Economic Challenger: An International Journal*, 26(102).
 42. Mohammed, A., Shanmugam, S., Subramani, S. K., & Pal, S. K. (2024). *Strategic HRM and entrepreneurial ventures. Serbian Journal of Management.*
 43. Moolman, J. (2021). *Gendered digital networks and entrepreneurship in Africa. Gender & Development*, 29(3), 425–442. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2021.1983116>
 44. Muhammed, A., Sundararajan, S., & Lawal, T. (2022). The effect of training on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kano Metropolis. *Seybold Report*, 17(6), 115–128.
 45. Napier, D., Hoene, E., & Kalyanpur, A. (2022). *Access to finance for women entrepreneurs in digital platforms. World Bank Discussion Paper Series*, 99823.
 46. Nguyen, T. H., Newby, M., & Macaulay, M. (2020). *Digital marketing strategies among microenterprises. Information Systems Frontiers*, 22(3), 713–728.
 47. Nwachukwu, C. E., Ifeoma, A., & James, N. (2018). Adoption of social media platforms by female entrepreneurs in South-East Nigeria. *Journal of Management and Strategy*, 9(1), 1–10.
 48. Obi, T., & Mbah, F. (2020). Instagram adoption and entrepreneurial marketing among female clothing vendors

- in Enugu. *African Journal of Business Management*, 14(10), 296–307.
49. Ogundana, O. M., Sunday, K. S., & Adeoye, A. O. (2020). Financial constraints and female entrepreneurship in Nigeria: A disaggregated analysis. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 11(16), 47–59.
 50. Okeke, C. I., Onuoha, J. C., & Okonkwo, I. (2021). Gender and entrepreneurship: The socio-cultural influences on women's business in Nigeria. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Emerging Economies*, 7(2), 112–128.
 51. Olanrewaju, A. S. T., Hossain, M. U., & Olaopa, O. R. (2020). Digital inclusion and women entrepreneurs in Nigeria: Implications for policy and practice. *Telematics and Informatics*, 48, 101347.
 52. Olanrewaju, A., & Kayode, B. (2020). Access to ICT and women's e-commerce adoption in West Africa. *African Journal of Business and Economic Research*, 15(1), 123–145.
 53. Olatokun, W., & Adeboyejo, O. (2009). Information and communication technology (ICT) use in small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. *The Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 36(1), 1–14.
 54. Onyejekwe, I. M., & Akpan, E. J. (2021). Social media literacy among Nigerian women entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Gender and Development Issues*, 5(2), 88–101.
 55. Osinubi, T. S., & Adefeso, H. A. (2021). Gendered access to finance in African entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender Studies*, 10(2), 83–97.
 56. Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.
 57. Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). Free Press.
 58. Ruhode, E., & Owei, V. (2020). *The effectiveness of public-private partnerships in digital skills training for female entrepreneurs in Africa*. *Information Technology for Development*, 26(3), 567–586.
 59. Shanmugam, S., Rajkumar, T., Senthilkumar, T., Mohammed, A., & Prince Martin, V. (2024). *An analytical study on individual investors' decisions*. *European Chemical Bulletin*, 12(1), 3706–3717.
 60. Sundararajan, S., & Mohammed, A. (2022). *Entrepreneurial opportunities for women*. In *Proceedings of the Conference on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment*. *European Journal of Humanities and Educational Advancements, Special Issue 1*, 112–115.
 61. Sundararajan, S., & Mohammed, A. (2023). *Exploring the dynamics of women's entrepreneurship: A conceptual analysis*. *Bayero Business Review Journal*, 7(1).
 62. Sundararajan, S., & Mohammed, A. (2024). *A comparative study on gender equality and women empowerment in India vs Nigeria*. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 42(67).
 63. Sundararajan, S., Mohammed, A., & Lawal, T. (2022). *Emerging trends of business transformation*. *MSNIM Management Review*, 1, 36–44.
 64. UN Women. (2022). *Gender equality and women's empowerment in the digital age*. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-age>
 65. Van Dijk, J. A. G. M. (2020). *The digital divide* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.
 66. Venkatesh, V., & Bala, H. (2008). *Technology acceptance model 3 and a research agenda on interventions*. *Decision Sciences*, 39(2), 273–315.
 67. World Bank. (2020). *Bridging the gender digital divide: Challenges and an agenda for action*. World Bank Group.