

The Impact Of Push And Pull Factors On The Sustainability Of Women-Led Business Ventures In The Digital Space: A Study In Chennai

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ABSTRACT :

The study aims to investigate the impact of the pressure factors on women-led business income in Chennai's digital space. The research will focus on identifying the various factors that motivate or discourage women from starting and maintaining a business in the digital space, such as socio-economic conditions and personal motivations (push factors) and availability of resources and support systems (pull factors). Data was collected from 294 women entrepreneurs in Chennai through structured questionnaires, and analyzed using percentage analysis and structural equation modeling. Research has shown that motivation factors play an important role in the sustainability of women-led digital spaces.

Keywords: women entrepreneurs, absorptive capacity, sustenance.

INTRODUCTION :

In India, women's entrepreneurial activity in recent years has grown considerably. Additionally, a larger number of women are actively seeking work in the business sector

and making significant progress. Approximately 8 million women in India own or operate their own businesses, compared to approximately 126 million women worldwide. However, women only own and operate about 10 percent of formal enterprises in India, despite the fact that women globally hold about 37 percent of all formal businesses. As a result of policies, support, and backing from communities and governments, women have become prominent leaders in both the public and private sectors. According to PEST Analysis, India has received recognition for its progress in gender equity and women's empowerment in politics.

Women have made significant progress in three main areas: education, governance, and business. Although women's businesses are more frequently present in almost all sectors of the economic system, the number of women-owned enterprises in the unorganized sector is higher than in the organized sector. An exclusive chapter titled "Integration of Women in Development" was included in the government's seventh five-year economic development plan in relation to economic development. The recommendations for specific targets, training centres, new equipment development, marketing assistance, and decision-making procedures should be included.

The eight-year five-year plan provides employment and income opportunities for rural women by establishing a special programme to empower women as business owners. This was done in order to empower women as business owners through the plan. As part of its efforts to support female-owned businesses, the government also approved the Women's Component Plant Program. The Ministry of Small Industry has established the Trade-related Entrepreneurship Support and Development Programme (TREAD) to foster women's entrepreneurial skills in various regions., including rural, semi-urban, and urban areas. To optimize economic growth and development, a variety of initiatives have been launched, such as "MahilaUdyam Nidhi, Micro Cordite Scheme for Women, Mahila Vikas Nidhi, Women Entrepreneurial Development Programmes, Marketing Development Fund for Women Fourth Consortium of Women entrepreneurs of India, Support for Training and

Employment Programme of Women (STEP), and Marketing Development Fund for Women Fourth Consortium of Women entrepreneurs of India”.

The advancements in technology, education, modernization, globalization, and urbanization have led to more opportunities for women to participate in the workforce. The traditional roles and responsibilities of women, which were focused on the domestic household, have now shifted to an emphasis on financial autonomy. Engaging in entrepreneurial activities through social networking can empower women to gain economic independence, increase self-confidence, and improve their awareness, which can in turn benefit the communities they support. This can lead to positive changes not only for the women themselves, such as improved health, education, and skills, but also in their overall quality of life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Casson (2003) in his book "The Entrepreneur: An Economic Theory" taking into account the importance of entrepreneurship in promoting economic growth and development. The author emphasizes the significance of government support, access to funding and a robust network of mentorship and guidance in promoting successful entrepreneurship.

Herath and Mahmood (2013) proposed a research model using strategic orientation to evaluate the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries is presented. This model is aimed at providing information on factors influencing the success of small and medium-sized enterprises in these regions. The study argues that a strategic orientation towards innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking can lead to better performance for SMEs. The study also highlights the importance of government support, access to funding, and a strong network of mentorship and guidance in fostering successful entrepreneurship.

Barot (2015) examines the key success factors of entrepreneurship. The study argues that entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the economy by creating jobs, promoting innovation and encouraging

competition. The study also highlights the importance of government support, access to funding, and a strong network of mentorship and guidance in fostering successful entrepreneurship.

Akhila Pai (2018) found that Indian women entrepreneurs are not concerned about the "male-only" curse in entrepreneurship, as advancements in technology and ease of communication have created new opportunities for them in the digital business market. Digital media provides a platform for women to raise their voices and be heard, and also allows for anonymity, which can eliminate gender bias. The concept of "Minimum Investment, Maximum Profit" in internet companies is helping women entrepreneurs establish their own identities in the startup ecosystem of the digital economy. The study aimed to determine the status and significance of women entrepreneurs in India's digital startup environment.

Hujjatullah Fazlurrahman et al (2020) used a multiple regression analysis to examine the differences in entrepreneurial intent between business and engineering students. The study used 92 students in Surabaya as its sample (56 business students and 36 engineering students), and found that three had positive effect on entrepreneurial intent among business scholars, but none of the variables had a substantial influence on engineering students' entrepreneurial intention.

In a study conducted by Abdul Basit, Wong, and Sethumadhavan (2020), they investigated the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The study surveyed 125 women SME owners, and used AMOS 22 and structural equation modeling for data analysis. The results showed that "knowledge" had a detrimental effect on women's entrepreneurial performance, while other difficulties identified in previous studies, such as lack of emotional intelligence, lack of family support, poor risk-taking behavior, and gender stereotypes, did not. The study concluded that women's entrepreneurial success is dependent on their job experiences, skills, and industry expertise in order to operate and expand their firms. The researchers recommended that SME women entrepreneurs invest in continuous learning to acquire relevant skills and knowledge, and that the government

should foster women's entrepreneurship through effective and practical training programs.

The study by Basit, Wong, and Sethumadhavan (2020) examines the difficulties encountered by female entrepreneurs in Malaysia in the current century. The study uses qualitative methodology and conducted extensive interviews with 30 Malaysian business owners. A study discovered that the primary obstacles faced by the women entrepreneurs include obtaining financial resources, limited access to technology and digital knowledge, and societal perceptions towards women in business. The study suggests that government aid and policies, as well as mentorship and networking opportunities, can help to address these challenges.

Agarwal et al. (2021) found that growing growth of women's entrepreneurial communities (WECs) over the past few decades has attracted interest from many government and non-governmental organizations. The study aimed to discover the critical criteria for the expansion of WEC. The study interviewed 33 women entrepreneurs with varying levels of entrepreneurial experience from different regions of Uttar Pradesh, India, and used an analytical hierarchical process to rank the factors affecting the sustainable growth of WEC.

Afshan, G., Shahid, and Tunio (2021) examined the experiences of women entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a qualitative research approach, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with 24 female entrepreneurs in Pakistan. The results revealed that the pandemic had a detrimental effect on the businesses of these women, but also presented opportunities for learning and development. The researchers emphasized the significance of government aid, access to technology and digital skills, and networking and mentoring in helping these women entrepreneurs adjust to the changes caused by the pandemic.

Kelly, G. et al. (2022) conducted a study on the experiences of women in digital entrepreneurship. The research aimed to understand how women navigate and participate in digital work environments and how they shape these environments. The study employed a qualitative approach, using interviews to gather data from a group of female digital entrepreneurs. The research

found that women digital entrepreneurs take on dual roles as both managers of the process and individuals undergoing a change in digital contexts characterized by fluid structures, uncertainty, and broader gender and capitalist social relations. The study also shows the active role these women play in their transition and the creative ways they acquire new information, skills, and relationships. This study adds to the current literature by emphasizing the lesser-explored aspect of career transition, particularly the transitional phase, and how gender and neoliberal narratives perpetuate women's outsider status in digital spaces.

RESEARCH GAP :

The present study aims to fill the research gap on the topic of women entrepreneurship in digital spaces, specifically in the context of Chennai, post-pandemic. While there is a wealth of research on women entrepreneurship in general, currently, there are no studies specifically examining the challenges and opportunities faced by female entrepreneurs in the digital space. Furthermore, research is required to take into account unique cultural and social factors that may affect Chennai's entrepreneurial women's experience, and how they may differ from those in other regions. Additionally, more research is required to explore the lasting impacts of the pandemic on female entrepreneurship in digital realms, specifically in terms of their ability to establish, expand, and maintain their ventures.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STUDY :

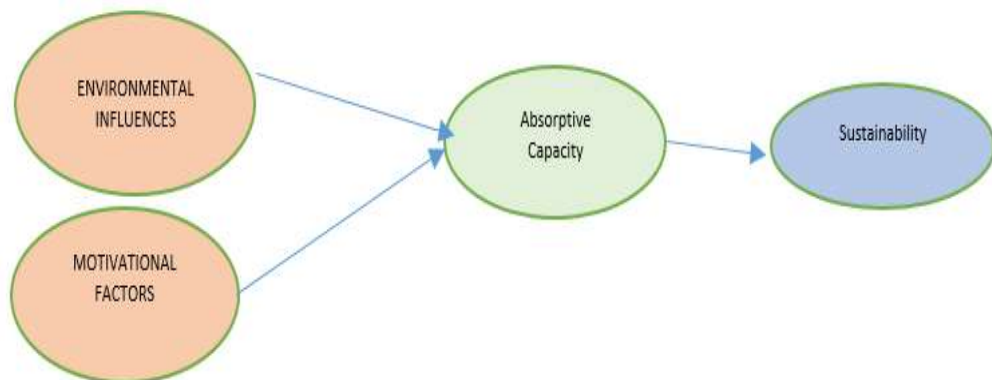


Figure 1 : Conceptual Model

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

1. To conduct a study on demographic characteristics of female entrepreneurs operating in digital spaces within the Chennai region.
2. To create a theoretical framework that improves the comprehension of the elements that have an impact on the longevity of female entrepreneurs in digital sectors, with a specific focus on the Chennai area.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY :

H01 : The impact of external factors on sustainability of women-led businesses in the digital space of Chennai is insignificant due to their ability to absorb new information.

H11 : External factors play a significant role in sustainability of women-led businesses in the digital space of Chennai due to their ability to absorb new information.

H02 : Factors that inspire and motivate women entrepreneurs have a positive impact on the sustainability of their businesses in the digital space of Chennai.

H12: Factors that inspire and motivate women entrepreneurs do not have a significant impact on the sustainability of their businesses in the digital space of Chennai.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

- Universe: Women Entrepreneurs in Digital Space in Chennai city
- Sample size: 294 women respondents - convenience sampling.
- Research Design: This study uses descriptive research techniques.
- Tools of data collection: Questionnaire covering study constructs.
- Tools used: Percentage analysis, Structural Equation Modelling.

DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS :

Structural Equation Modelling was performed by way of AMOS v24.0 to calculate estimates of the standardised linear regression for the model routes, which are then

utilised to reveal the connections between the variables being studied.

RESULTS

Objective 1 : To study the demographic factors of the respondents.

Table 1 : Demographic Factors of the Respondents

Variable	Categories	At Start time		At Present	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)	18 – 25	21	07.14	14	04.76
	26 – 30	140	47.62	124	42.17
	31 – 35	70	23.81	81	27.55
	36 – 40	28	09.52	34	11.56
	> 40	35	11.91	41	13.96
	Average (SD)	32.63 (7.38)		32.89 (6.91)	
Aspect	Categories	At start time		At present	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Marital status	Single	35	11.90	14	04.76
	Married	259	88.10	280	95.24
Number of children	No children	42	14.28	21	07.14
	1	63	21.43	63	21.43
	2 & above	189	64.29	210	71.43
Type of family	Joint	77	26.19	84	28.57
	Nuclear	217	73.81	210	71.43
Number of dependents	None	28	09.52	21	02.40
	1	70	23.81	77	23.81
	2	189	64.29	189	71.43
	3 & above	07	02.40	07	02.40
Monthly Family income (Rs)	< 1 lacs	134	64.29	126	42.86
	1 lac - 5 lacs	146	30.95	134	45.58
	> 5 lacs	14	04.76	34	11.56
	Average (SD)	2.47 (1.27)		4.12 (1.54)	

The three factors are examined at two time points- at the time of starting of enterprise and present. Table 1 presents the details of age of entrepreneurs at the time of commencing business.

A high proportion of entrepreneurs are over the age of 25 when they launch their businesses. About 47.62 percent of entrepreneurs are between the ages of 26 and 30. With an additional 23.81 percent belonging to the age group of

36-40 years, 71.43 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 25-40 years.

One can become an entrepreneur at any age; however, it appears that the age range of 25 to 40 years is optimal for many.

The majority of responder entrepreneurs are married with children at the time they launch their businesses. 88.1 percent of respondent entrepreneurs are married, and 85.72 percent have children. Even though the majority are from nuclear families, they have dependents at the time of firm formation. Approximately 73.81 percent of respondents belong to a nuclear family, and 90.48 percent have at least one dependant.

The majority of respondent entrepreneurs (64.29%) came from families with monthly incomes of less than one lakh rupees. Another 30.95% of respondents had a family income between 1 and 5 lakhs.

Therefore, it can be stated that entrepreneurship in the small service sector is primarily limited to those with low and moderate incomes. Those who have founded businesses are also married, have dependents, and are members of nuclear families.

Objective 2 : To build a conceptual model contributing to the sustainability of women entrepreneurs in digital space.

This study aims to investigate how environmental influences, motivational factors affect absorptive capacity and subsequently contribute to sustainability of women entrepreneurs in digital space along with the respective items for the constructs of the study.

Table 2 : Variables of the Study

<i>Elements</i>	<i>Count</i>
Number of observed variables	4
Number of unobserved variables	2
Number of exogenous variables	4
Number of endogenous variables	2
Number of variables in the model	6

Figure 2 explains the hypothesized model.

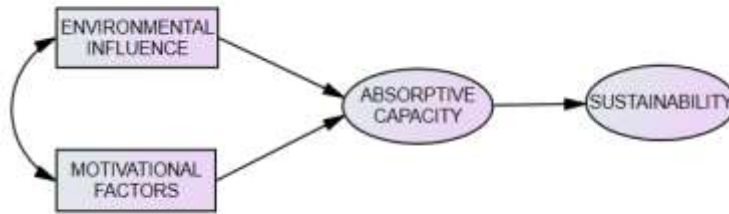


Figure 2. Path Model

The indices within acceptable ranges has been updated (IFI=0.937; GFI=0.989; AGFI=0.933;SRMR=0.007).

Hypothesis 1 proposed environmental influences contribute to the sustainability of women entrepreneurs with their absorptive capacity. The results indicated that environmental influences has impact on sustenance in business venture. However, this relation is not strong.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that motivational factors contribute to the sustainability of women entrepreneurs with their absorptive capacity. The results indicated that environmental influences has impact on sustenance in business venture. However, this relation is strong.

Table 3 Regression Weights

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Environmental Influences	Sustainability	0.584	0.060	7.986	***
Motivational Factors	Sustainability	0.382	0.039	9.059	***

Table 3 shows that results of analysis indicate apositive

relationship between constructs. Hypothesis 2 was found to be strong.

FINDINGS :

- "At startup, many entrepreneurs are over 25. 47.62% of entrepreneurs are 26-30 years old, and 23.81 percent of responders were 36-40 years old, making a total of 71.43 percent of entrepreneurs within the age range of 25-40. This suggests that while one can become an entrepreneur at any age, a significant proportion of entrepreneurs choose to start their ventures within the age range of 25-40."
- "At startup, most entrepreneurs are married and have children. 88.1 percent of entrepreneurs are married and 85.72 percent have children. Despite this, the majority of entrepreneurs come from nuclear families, with 73.81 percent of entrepreneurs reporting to be from nuclear families. Additionally, 90.48 percent of entrepreneurs have dependents, indicating that they have financial responsibilities even before starting their business."
- "The majority of entrepreneurs, 64.29%, came from low-income homes. Specifically, 30.95 percent of entrepreneurs reported having household income of Rs. 1-5 lakhs. This suggests that small service industry entrepreneurs are generally low- and middle-income individuals. Additionally, these entrepreneurs are mostly married with children and come from nuclear families."
- "Hypothesis 1 stated that environmental influences help women entrepreneurs survive. Results showed that environmental factors do affect firm survival, but the relationship is weak. This implies that while environmental factors play a role in the survival of women-led businesses, it is not the only or most significant factor."
- "Hypothesis 2 suggested that absorptive capacity and motivational elements maintain women entrepreneurs. Results showed that environmental factors do affect firm survival, and the relationship is strong. This suggests that both the ability to absorb and utilize new information and resources, as well as motivation, play a significant role in the survival of

women-led businesses."

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the present study aimed to delve into factors that play a role in long-term success of women entrepreneurs in digital realm, particularly in Chennai region. The findings uncovered those external factors, such as access to resources and support, have a significant impact on sustainability of women entrepreneurs. Additionally, internal factors like drive, ambition, and self-esteem were also found to contribute to sustainability of these entrepreneurs. This study highlights the importance of addressing societal issues such as gender discrimination, which can impede the ability of women entrepreneurs to sustain their businesses. However, it's essential to note that the study's scope was limited to a specific geographic area, Chennai, and had a limited number of participants, which limits generalizability of the findings. Therefore, more research is needed to explore effectiveness of different interventions and policies to support sustainability of women entrepreneurs in digital spaces. Furthermore, research is needed to understand challenges and opportunities that women entrepreneurs in different regions and cultures face.

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