

Negotiating Double Roles in Digital Marketing Adoption Among Women Digital Immigrant Home Based Microentrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has become an important driver of micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sustainability, particularly through the adoption of digital marketing strategies. However, for women home-based microentrepreneurs classified as digital immigrants, the adoption process is determined not only by technological factors but also by psychological barriers and sociocultural conditions. This study addresses the gap in understanding how digital marketing adoption is shaped by the intersection of technological anxiety and domestic role expectations. The aim of this study was to explore how double roles influenced the process of digital marketing adoption among women digital immigrant home-based microentrepreneurs. A qualitative interpretive approach was employed through in-depth interviews with 15 women home-based microentrepreneurs. The data were analyzed using NVivo through thematic coding and visual analysis. The findings revealed three main patterns: a strong preference for simple and accessible digital platforms, particularly WhatsApp; the presence of technological anxiety manifested through fear of making mistakes in digital interactions; and an initial trial pattern characterized by trial-and-error learning. These processes were strongly influenced by double roles, in which digital marketing activities were continuously negotiated within limited time availability between domestic and economic responsibilities. This study concluded that digital marketing adoption in this context was a situational and negotiated process shaped more by emotional comfort and time constraints than by technological sophistication.



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INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) serve as the backbone of Indonesia's economy. This sector contributes approximately 60.5% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbs around 96.9% of the workforce, playing a pivotal role in driving economic growth and employment creation (Afriyadi, 2023; Bakrie et al., 2024). The number of MSMEs has continued to increase, reaching more than 66 million business units in 2023 (Fauzan, 2025). Amid increasingly dynamic business competition and changing consumer behavior, MSME actors are required to utilize digital technologies to maintain competitiveness. Previous studies have shown that digitalization can improve operational efficiency, productivity, and business sustainability (Afrizal & Megananda, 2025) and (Ramadhani et al., 2025). One of the most widely adopted forms of digitalization is digital marketing, as it enables business owners to access broader markets, strengthen customer relationships, and enhance competitiveness through various digital platforms (Khairunisa & Misidawati, 2024; Nugroho & Sari, 2023).

Amid these developments, women have become important actors within Indonesia's MSME ecosystem. More than 64.5% of MSMEs are managed by women, with the majority operating as home-based microenterprises in sectors such as culinary products, fashion, handicrafts, and personal care products (GoodStats, 2023; Liputan6.com, 2022; SIRCLO Group, 2022). Their contributions are reflected not only in increasing household income but also in employment creation, community empowerment, and the development of a more inclusive economy (Bayumi et al., 2022; Nurjanah, 2017). However, operating businesses from home often creates blurred boundaries between domestic and entrepreneurial activities. Business operations are conducted within the same environment as household responsibilities, requiring women to simultaneously perform dual roles as household managers and business operators.

This situation creates substantial challenges for women home-based entrepreneurs. Previous studies indicate that women managing home-based businesses must continuously balance domestic responsibilities with business activities (Hidayah et al., 2023; Meylianingrum et al., 2024). Responsibilities such as childcare, cooking, and household management frequently overlap with production, promotion, and customer service activities. This condition creates limitations in time, energy, and attention, which may affect business development (Rahayu & Dayanti, 2020). Furthermore, (Rachmawati et al., 2021) found that the demands of dual roles can make it more difficult for female microentrepreneurs to learn and implement new business strategies, including digital marketing. Therefore, digital marketing adoption is not solely a technological issue but is also influenced by the ongoing demands of domestic responsibilities in everyday life.

This complexity is further influenced by the fact that many women operating home-based businesses belong to the digital immigrant category, referring to individuals who became familiar with digital technologies during adulthood. Compared with digital natives, this group generally requires more time to adapt to new technologies, tends to use technology more cautiously, and often relies on familiar communication practices (Nurhadryani et al., 2017; Tanring, 2014; Wijaya, 2017). Consequently, digital marketing adoption among these entrepreneurs does not always occur rapidly or linearly. Beyond limited digital literacy, they may experience challenges related to technical training, understanding digital marketing strategies, and optimizing digital platform utilization (Natalia et al., 2023; Parlyna & Girsang, 2024; Susanti et al., 2023). These conditions encourage women entrepreneurs to adopt digital technologies gradually based on their experiences, capabilities, and daily circumstances.

This phenomenon can be examined through the Diffusion of Innovation Theory proposed by Rogers, (2003). The theory explains that innovation adoption decisions are influenced by individuals' perceptions of an innovation, including its relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. However, in the context of women managing home-based businesses, digital marketing adoption appears to be influenced not only by innovation characteristics but also by the interaction between technological adaptation and everyday responsibilities. Dual roles may affect when entrepreneurs have opportunities to experiment with digital technologies, which platforms they choose, and how digital marketing activities are integrated into household routines. Thus, digital marketing adoption among women home-based entrepreneurs involves not only accepting technological innovation but also negotiating its implementation within the demands of daily life.

Although research on digital marketing adoption among MSMEs has grown substantially, previous studies have primarily emphasized factors such as digital literacy, technological readiness, infrastructure availability, and external support (Angkhasakulkiat et al., 2025; Oktiani et al., 2024; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2019). Meanwhile, research on women entrepreneurs has generally focused on work–family conflict as an entrepreneurial challenge without specifically examining how dual roles shape the process of digital marketing

adoption in everyday practices. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand how digital immigrant women managing home-based businesses adopt digital marketing while navigating domestic role demands.

Addressing this research gap, this study aimed to explore how dual roles shaped the digital marketing adoption process among digital immigrant women managing micro home-based businesses by applying the Diffusion of Innovation Theory as a conceptual framework. This research contributes to the literature by providing empirical insights into the lived experiences of digital immigrant women entrepreneurs and highlighting the psychological, temporal, and sociocultural dimensions of technology adoption. The findings are expected to provide practical implications for policymakers, business development practitioners, and technology designers in developing more inclusive and context-sensitive digital marketing strategies for women home-based microentrepreneurs.

METHOD

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm. This approach was selected because the research aimed to explore how female home-based microentrepreneurs classified as digital immigrants adopted digital marketing within their daily lives, particularly while managing dual roles as household managers and business owners. The interpretive approach allowed the study to examine participants' experiences and perspectives as part of the data collection process.

The research applied an exploratory case study design. This design was selected because the study examined the complex and contextual process of digital marketing adoption among female home-based microentrepreneurs, where business activities were closely connected with domestic responsibilities and everyday life dynamics. The case study design enabled an in-depth exploration of how dual roles influenced decisions, practices, and strategies related to digital technology adoption in business marketing.

Research Subjects

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria: (1) women running home-based micro-enterprises; (2) individuals classified as "digital immigrants" (i.e., those who began using digital technology during adulthood); (3) those who have used or are currently adopting digital marketing (e.g., via WhatsApp Business or Instagram); and (4) those actively fulfilling domestic roles within the household. Additionally, snowball sampling may be utilized to expand the pool of information from initial informants if necessary.

The research was conducted with female micro-entrepreneurs running home-based businesses in the Bandung area and its surroundings, West Java. This location was selected because the region exhibits active development of home-based MSMEs and serves as a representative setting for illustrating the phenomenon of digitalization among home-based micro-entrepreneurs. Using purposive sampling, the study involved 15 informants—female home-based micro-entrepreneurs belonging to the digital immigrant group.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and a literature review. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the informants' subjective experiences regarding the adoption of digital marketing, the challenges of balancing dual roles, and their adaptation strategies. Observations were carried out to directly witness digital marketing activities within the context of daily household life. Meanwhile, a literature review was used to gather supporting data.

Consequently, the use of digital technology relies heavily on the availability of spare moments amidst various household responsibilities.

This situation means that the adoption of digital marketing does not function as a standalone activity; rather, it is flexibly integrated into the rhythm of the informants' daily lives. In other words, the technology is utilized during breaks from housework—such as after domestic chores are completed or during specific idle moments. This pattern demonstrates that the decision to access and use digital technology is driven more by the dynamics of time allocation and role distribution than by business needs or technical proficiency alone. Ultimately, in the context of women running home-based micro-enterprises, digital marketing is best understood as a practice that adapts to the rhythm of domestic life, rather than an activity that significantly alters the structure of their daily routines.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that digital marketing adoption among women microentrepreneurs classified as digital immigrants was determined not only by functional technological factors but also by psychological aspects, individual strategies, and sociocultural contexts, particularly those related to the dual roles they managed in their daily lives. Based on the NVivo data analysis, the adoption process revealed three interconnected dynamics.

First, the informants demonstrated a strong preference for digital platforms with low levels of complexity, such as WhatsApp, which were considered more suitable for managing the time constraints associated with their dual roles. The initial adoption process occurred informally, independently, and through trial-and-error learning, with ease of use becoming a primary consideration rather than the sophistication of technological features.

Second, the primary challenges experienced by participants were not limited to technical constraints but also involved psychological barriers in the form of technological anxiety. Fear of making mistakes when using digital applications restricted their willingness to explore broader digital features. In many cases, this condition was reinforced by their multiple responsibilities, which limited the time and energy available for learning and adapting to new technologies.

Third, dual roles emerged as the most influential contextual factor throughout the digital marketing adoption process. Women microentrepreneurs functioned not only as economic actors but also as primary managers of domestic responsibilities, requiring digital marketing activities to be continuously negotiated alongside household demands. Consequently, digital technology use was not always autonomous or systematically scheduled but was flexibly integrated into available periods between domestic activities. Thus, dual roles were not merely background conditions but became structural factors shaping the ways, timing, and intensity of digital technology adoption.

Theoretically, these findings indicated that digital marketing adoption among digital immigrant women occurred through pragmatic and relational processes that were strongly influenced by the negotiation of dual roles. Emotional comfort, domestic time constraints, and efficient technology utilization appeared to be more dominant considerations than the optimization of digital features themselves. This study concluded that the dual roles of women in home-based microbusinesses were not merely contextual factors but structural elements that actively shaped patterns of digital technology adoption.

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