



# The Role of Instagram Videos on the Growth of Female-Owned Businesses in Lagos

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## ABSTRACT

*Although videos are a compelling form of content on Instagram, women entrepreneurs on Instagram exist within a highly competitive space, and they need to seek out approaches that will give them a competitive edge while creating content for promoting their businesses. The study aimed to explore how Instagram videos can engage potential consumers, promote products, and increase brand awareness. Twenty-three women entrepreneurs were chosen using a snowball sampling technique and were then interviewed in detail, using a qualitative approach. The study showed that Instagram videos and other marketing campaigns influence the growth of women-owned businesses. The key metrics that indicated growth were engagement rates, direct communication channels, lead generation and conversion rates, website traffic, testimonials, and follower growth and retention. These metrics helped women entrepreneurs assess and improve their marketing strategies, identify areas that need improvement, and make decisions to maintain and improve company success. The study recommends that future research should combine both qualitative and quantitative research designs to provide statistical validation for the study's findings as well as content analysis of Instagram videos used by women-owned businesses on Instagram.*

## KEYWORDS

Business growth, campaigns, female entrepreneurs, Instagram videos, marketing, women-owned businesses

## INTRODUCTION

Studies have shown that many female-owned businesses exist in the online ecosystem, particularly on social media platforms (Tahir & Raza, 2020). Instagram is a social media platform that effectively uses its features to help female entrepreneurs target and reach their potential customers. As a result, many women have grown their businesses by using Instagram to create content. Sasu (2024) states that there are 12.2 million Instagram users in Nigeria. This means that Instagram has become a crucial tool for Nigerian business owners who want to grow their market presence.

Entrepreneurs often develop products or services that are customised to meet the needs of their target market. This allows them to tap into a large customer base and maximise their potential for success. According to Umeh (2022), even though Instagram is mainly used for socialising and entertainment, many Nigerian brands, specifically 96%, use it as a platform for business activities. Instagram and other social

media platforms support the development of businesses led by women as social media plays a crucial role in the marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place and positioning) for ensuring business success (Pantano, Priporas & Migliano 2019).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the e-commerce industry in Africa was already growing steadily, however, the rapid advancement of this trend was greatly helped by social media platforms (Zou & Cheshmehzangi, 2022). The significant increase in the number of businesses owned by women in Lagos and other areas is largely due to the important role that Instagram and other social media platforms play in helping them grow and achieve success (Olsson & Bernhard, 2021). Women entrepreneurs in Lagos, Nigeria are increasingly utilising social media platforms such as Instagram to promote their businesses (Mamodu, Moses, Ekeagbara & Peter, 2019).

Instagram and other social media platforms provide a strong platform for businesses to connect with potential customers, display their products or services, and improve brand awareness. A study by Chakraborty & Biswal (2023) highlights the role of social media presence in fostering entrepreneurship intentions and strong digital presence, without delving into the specific impact of Instagram videos on business growth; this portends a gap in existing literature. Similarly, an article by Ayers (2024) suggests guides and benefits of social media for female-owned businesses, likewise, SRC (2024) also focuses on usage and benefits of social media for female entrepreneurs but fails to address the impact of Instagram videos on customer engagement, brand visibility, and sales conversion.

Additionally, it has been proven that business owners consider Instagram videos as a great way to connect with potential customers, show off products or services, and increase brand recognition (Rahayu, Masduki, & Ellyanawati, 2023). More research is needed to accurately determine how Instagram videos affect the growth of businesses owned and operated by women in Lagos. Furthermore, there is a lack of precise understanding about how Instagram videos specifically impact the growth of female-owned businesses in Lagos, Nigeria.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the role of Instagram videos in the growth of female-owned businesses in Lagos. Specifically, the study seeks to do the following:

- Analyse how female entrepreneurs in Lagos utilise Instagram videos for business promotion.
- Determine the benefits and challenges associated with using Instagram videos for business growth.
- Understand how Instagram videos influence customer engagement, brand visibility, and sales conversion for female-owned businesses in Lagos.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How do female entrepreneurs in Lagos utilise Instagram videos for business promotion?
2. What are the key benefits and challenges associated with using Instagram videos for business growth?
3. How do Instagram videos influence customer engagement, brand visibility, and sales conversion for female-owned businesses in Lagos?

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

With the steady increase in the use of social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook post-COVID-19 era, more businesses now benefit from the use of social media platforms for promoting their businesses (Pantano et al., 2019). There is a significant number of female entrepreneurs in Lagos, Nigeria, who use Instagram to expand their businesses and engage a broader audience (Mamodu et al., 2019). It would be of great benefit for different stakeholders to understand the role of Instagram videos and content in generating engagement and growth for businesses owned by women in Lagos. This information is essential for a variety of reasons including:

**Economic Empowerment:** The comprehension of the significance of Instagram videos for business success can encourage a greater number of women to utilise digital platforms for economic growth, resulting in a greater sense of financial stability and independence (Siegrist, 2022).

**Policy Development:** The findings from this study have implications for policymaking, specifically to promote and support the use of digital tools for female business owners. This could also serve as a basis for providing financial support to the businesses that require it.

**Marketing practice:** The field of marketing is fast evolving and insights from this study will further contribute to theories and practice of marketing in the era of social media (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). By exploring this topic, we can gain insights into what types of videos and content are most effective in driving engagement and sales for female-owned businesses in Lagos. This information can help policymakers and support organisations design programmes that address the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and promote economic inclusivity.

Ultimately, this initiative could encourage more women to utilise digital platforms like Instagram to grow their businesses.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Literature Review**

This paper adopts Social Marketing Theory to investigate, via Instagram videos, the contribution of female-owned businesses in Lagos' expansion. Social Marketing Theory applies marketing principles to influence behaviours that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good. This theoretical framework is particularly relevant as it helps understand how Instagram, as a social media platform, can be leveraged to promote and support female entrepreneurship.

### **Social Marketing Theory Overview**

Social Marketing Theory is based on the principle of using marketing techniques to achieve social change (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). Understanding the needs, preferences, and behaviours of the target audience is crucial. It's important to divide the broad audience into specific segments to effectively tailor messages. Offering something valuable to the audience in exchange for adopting a behaviour is a key strategy. It's also important to recognise and address competing behaviours that the target audience may find more appealing. Utilising Product, Price, Place, and Promotion strategies can be effective in influencing behaviour (Bhattacharya, 2022).

The theory focuses on understanding the needs, preferences, and actions of the target audience. It aims to offer value in return for their desired behaviour and address any conflicting behaviours. Highlighting the difficulties they face and their growth potential, the study applies the theory to focus on Lagos-based female entrepreneurs who have limited access to traditional marketing channels and a need for greater visibility.

Additionally, it considers demographic and industry segmentation. Instagram videos demonstrate the value of the company's expansion through content such as product tutorials and customer quotes. The study highlights the cost-effectiveness and wide audience reach of Instagram videos compared to traditional marketing methods. It also discusses competition from other social media platforms. Finally, the theory helps identify effective content strategies that attract the target market and drive business growth.

### **Social Media and Economic Development**

Instagram has demonstrated its ability to support a wide range of entrepreneurial endeavours by promoting sectors like agriculture, tourism, art, and health, and by exerting influence on the political economy. The rise of Instagram as a platform for promoting digital entrepreneurship can be credited to several factors. One of the key reasons is the widespread availability of smartphones, which makes it easy for people to access the platform. Additionally, Instagram offers an affordable setup and operational costs, making it accessible to a wide range of entrepreneurs. Moreover, its global reach allows users to connect with people from all around the world, further enhancing its appeal (Adekunle & Kajumba, 2021).

Instagram offers a range of features including Stories, IGTV (Instagram TV), and the capability to share photos and videos. Videos enable businesses to establish connections with their target audience, showcase their products, and offer insights into their behind-the-scenes operations. Female entrepreneurs can leverage Instagram to enhance brand visibility and foster a customer base (Adekunle & Kajumba, 2021).

Female entrepreneurs in Lagos, Nigeria, are increasingly leveraging social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to promote their businesses. Instagram videos offer a powerful way to engage with potential customers. While Cotter (2019) argues that social media platforms like Instagram offer great opportunities for women entrepreneurs, it's crucial to acknowledge the challenge of the digital divide and limited accessibility in emerging countries such as Nigeria. In these countries, a significant portion of the population lacks access to reliable internet and digital devices. Women, especially those in lower socioeconomic groups, may face a greater impact from this digital divide, which can hinder their potential to utilise Instagram and other social media platforms for business expansion (Hilbert, 2011).

Similarly, the algorithm of this platform gives priority to content that receives high user engagement. This engagement can be influenced by various factors, including the number of followers and interactions. It can be quite challenging for women entrepreneurs who are new to the platform or have fewer followers to gain visibility and reach, even if they produce high-quality content. This bias in algorithms can pose a challenge for aspiring female entrepreneurs who are looking to make their mark on Instagram (Cotter, 2019). Nevertheless, social media platforms like Instagram provide a cost-effective solution for marketing and reaching a broader audience, which is particularly advantageous for women entrepreneurs who often face challenges in accessing traditional advertising channels. A study by McKinsey and Company (2016) found that women entrepreneurs who use digital platforms experience a 50% increase in revenue compared to those who do not. This demonstrates how social media can

help women overcome financial and logistical barriers, enabling them to compete more effectively in the marketplace.

## **Instagram Videos and Customer Engagement**

In their study, Rachmah & Mayangsari (2019) examined how consumers communicate with local fashion brands on Instagram and explored the relationship between the content posted by these brands and consumer engagement. The study utilised an online questionnaire to gather data from active Instagram users, categorising various types of content as entertainment, informative, or remuneration posts. According to the findings, the entertainment content category has a major impact on customer engagement. It is suggested that local fashion brands enhance their marketing strategy by creating more entertainment content alongside other forms. Although entertainment content can capture attention quickly, it may not be enough to maintain customer loyalty over time or ensure steady business growth. Creating a devoted customer following typically involves finding the right mix of informative and rewarding content to consistently captivate and please customers. Relying too heavily on entertainment content can result in short-term bursts of engagement without building meaningful connections (Hollebeek, 2011). Entertainment content often elicits emotional reactions like happiness, amusement, or enthusiasm. These emotions can foster stronger bonds between consumers and brands. When customers feel emotionally connected, they are more likely to remain loyal and engage with the content by liking, commenting, and sharing. According to research by Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2016), building an intense emotional connection with customers is crucial for fostering loyalty and advocacy. Entertainment content can be a valuable tool in achieving this, as it helps to create deeper relationships with the audience.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This research employed an exploratory study to delve into the impact of Instagram videos on female-owned businesses in Lagos.

**Qualitative Approach:** In-depth interviews were conducted for selected female-owned businesses on Instagram.

**Sampling Strategy:** The snowballing sampling technique was adopted to recruit participants for the study. This was done tactically to ensure that a diverse representation of female business owners was interviewed. A total of 23 participants were used for the study.

The snowball sampling technique was chosen for this study to get recommendations of participants that fit into the categories relevant to the study by leveraging the networks of the initial participants who are female entrepreneurs who have businesses on Instagram and use video content for promoting their businesses. The research continued until a saturation point was reached, whereby, the participants interviewed did not add any new information to the data already collated from previous participants. The snowballing sampling technique has been widely used for various qualitative research (Parker, Scott & Geddes 2020).

**Data Collection Methods:** One-on-one interviews were conducted with the participants via WhatsApp.

WhatsApp phone call was used to reach the participants as the participants found it convenient and natural due to the nature of their business which is always online. It also helped to create a relaxed setting for getting authentic responses from the participants (Salmons, 2014).

**RESULT**

The questions analysed consisted of open and closed-ended questions to enable the participants to clearly and easily provide answers to the questions that were posed. The questions asked are grouped and presented below:

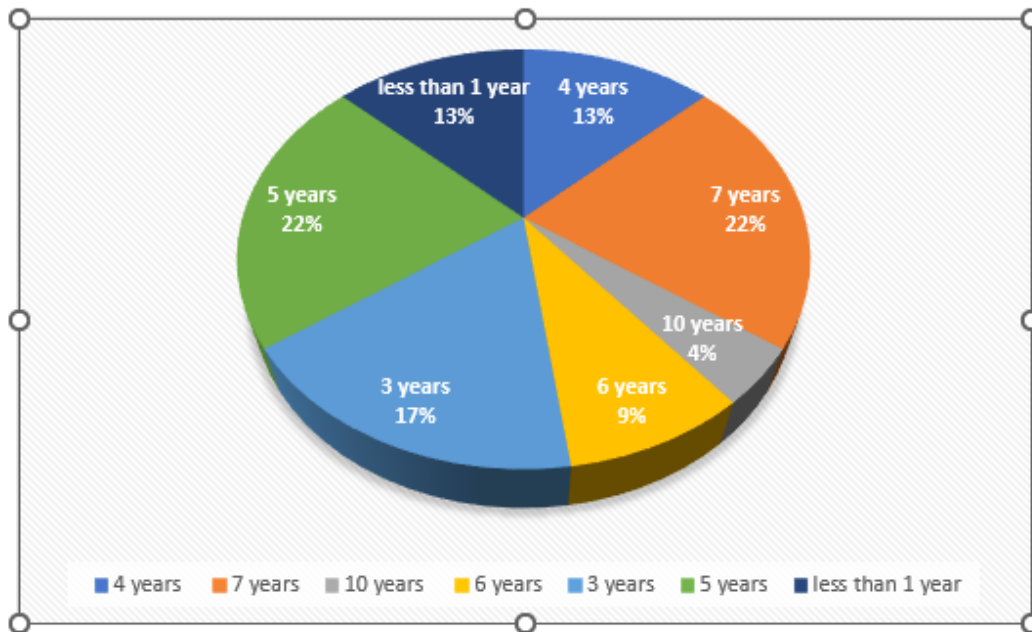
**Question:** What type of business do you do on IG?

**Table 1:** Indicating the nature of business on Instagram

Type of business	Number of participants
Fashion	6
Education	2
Gifts	3
Real Estate	3
Health	4
Food	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

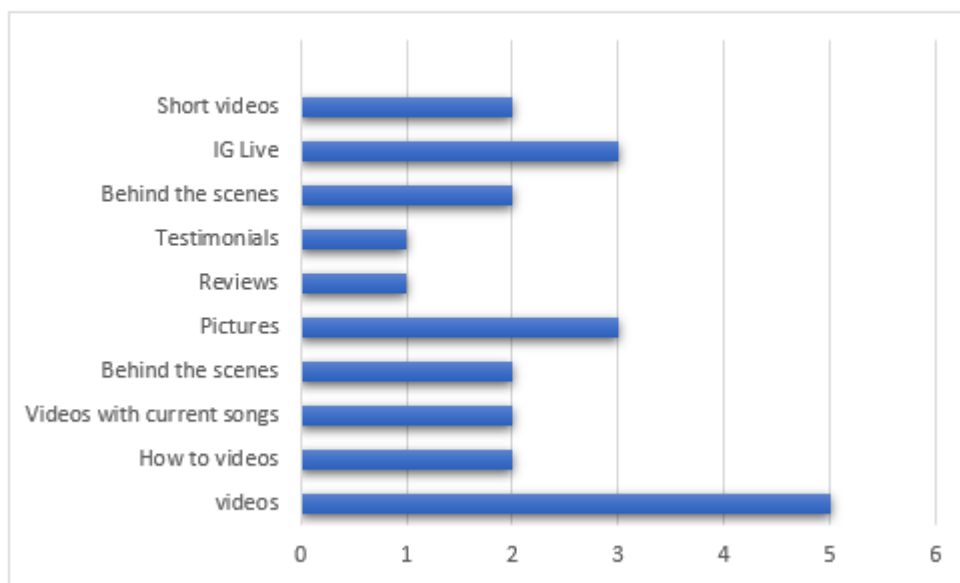
**Figure 1:** Pie Chart showcasing how long participants have been using Instagram to promote their business/product

- How long have you been using Instagram to promote your business/product?



**Figure 2:** Chart showcasing content that resonates best with an audience on Instagram

- What kind of content do you think resonates best with our audience on Instagram?



**Table 2:** The metric participants use for measuring the success of Instagram campaigns

Metrics for measuring the success of campaigns
Likes, direct messaging on Instagram, direct WhatsApp messages and leads from Google My Business
Likes, comments and reposts
Highlights
Likes and comments
Increase in followers
Conversions
Leads
Direct Messaging
WhatsApp messages
Comments, likes
Reposts
Website visits
Phone calls
Likes
New followers, direct messaging
Testimonials
Followers
Likes
Direct messaging
WhatsApp messages
Likes, comments, and reposts
Leads

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The qualitative study was carried out using interviews. Findings from the interviews conducted indicate that various indicators play crucial roles in assessing the effectiveness and impact of marketing efforts on Instagram and other platforms.

### **Engagement Metrics** (Likes, Comments, and Reposts)

Receiving likes, comments, and reposts is a clear sign that the audience is actively engaging with and showing interest in the content shared by businesses owned by women. Having higher engagement rates is a clear indication of a strong bond with the target audience and greater visibility within the Instagram community. Other research has also emphasised the significance of these metrics. As an example, a study conducted by Rachmah & Mayangsari (2020) discovered a direct link between high engagement rates on Instagram and improved brand visibility and customer loyalty. This is especially advantageous for women entrepreneurs who want to create a powerful online presence and cultivate a devoted customer following.

### **Direct Communication Channels** (Direct Messaging, WhatsApp Messages, Phone Calls)

Direct messaging on Instagram and WhatsApp, as well as phone calls, provide valuable opportunities for personalised interaction with potential customers. These channels facilitate direct engagement, allowing businesses to address inquiries, provide assistance, and build relationships with prospects. According to Adekunle and Kajumba (2021), personalised communication through direct messaging enhances customer satisfaction and fosters trust, leading to higher conversion rates. This finding underscores the importance of utilising multiple communication channels to maintain a personal touch with customers.

### **Lead Generation and Conversion Metrics** (Leads from Google My Business, Conversions):

Leads generated from Google My Business and conversions represent tangible outcomes of marketing campaigns, indicating the effectiveness of promotional efforts in driving customer interest and action. By tracking leads and conversions, businesses can measure the return on investment (ROI) and assess the overall success of their marketing initiatives. Research by Cesaroni, Demartini and Paoloni (2017) supports this view, showing that effective social media marketing strategies can significantly enhance lead generation and conversion rates for female entrepreneurs in emerging markets.

### **Website Traffic and Testimonials**

Website visits and testimonials serve as additional indicators of campaign effectiveness, reflecting the ability of marketing efforts to drive traffic to the business website and influence purchasing decisions through positive feedback and recommendations from satisfied customers. Studies have demonstrated the importance of website traffic as a metric for online business success. For example, research by Smith and Zook (2016) indicates that higher website traffic correlates with increased sales and customer engagement, while positive testimonials build credibility and encourage new customers to make purchases.

### **Follower Growth and Retention** (Increase in Followers, New Followers)

The growth and retention of followers on Instagram signify the expansion of the business's audience reach and the establishment of a loyal customer base. Increasing



follower counts and attracting new followers indicate a growing brand presence and ongoing engagement with the target audience. This finding is consistent with the work of VanMeter, Grisaffe, Chonko and Roberts (2013) who found that follower growth on social media platforms is a critical indicator of brand popularity and market reach. For female entrepreneurs, maintaining a steady increase in followers is essential for long-term business growth and sustainability.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of marketing campaigns for female-owned businesses on Instagram and other platforms can be determined by examining a variety of factors. These include engagement metrics, direct communication channels, lead generation and conversion metrics, website traffic, testimonials, and follower growth and retention. By carefully analysing these metrics, businesses can assess the impact of their marketing strategies, pinpoint areas that need improvement, and make well-informed decisions to foster long-term growth and prosperity in the digital landscape.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

This study explores the impact of Instagram videos on the expansion of female-owned businesses in Lagos. It applies Social Marketing Theory to gain insights into the effective utilisation of social media marketing. The findings suggest that Instagram videos can be highly beneficial for female entrepreneurs. They have the potential to increase engagement, enable direct communication, generate leads, drive traffic to websites, and promote follower growth and retention. These advantages are in line with previous research, highlighting the diverse influence of social media on the success of businesses.

Measuring engagement metrics, such as the number of likes, comments, and reposts, is crucial in determining audience interest and establishing a solid online presence. Direct communication channels, such as direct messaging and WhatsApp, offer a chance for personalised interaction, which can greatly improve customer relationships and satisfaction. Lead generation and conversion metrics, obtained from platforms such as Google My Business, provide concrete proof of marketing effectiveness, allowing businesses to accurately measure their return on investment.

Website traffic and testimonials provide additional evidence of the effectiveness of marketing efforts, demonstrating the ability to attract visitors and impact purchasing decisions through positive customer feedback. Ultimately, the growth and retention of followers play a vital role in determining a business' expanding reach and the development of a dedicated customer base. These factors are crucial for ensuring long-term growth and sustainability.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made for female-owned businesses in Lagos looking to leverage Instagram videos for growth:

**High-Quality Content Creation:** Female entrepreneurs should prioritise creating high-quality, engaging video content that resonates with their target audience. This includes product demonstrations, customer testimonials, behind-the-scenes footage, and tutorials.

**Direct Communication Channels:** Businesses should actively use Instagram's direct messaging feature and integrate it with other communication platforms like WhatsApp to provide personalised customer service, answer inquiries promptly, and build stronger relationships with their audience.

**Leverage Metrics:** Regularly monitoring engagement metrics, lead generation, conversion rates, website traffic, and follower growth is essential. This data will help businesses understand the effectiveness of their marketing strategies and make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

**Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborating with influencers who have a strong following on Instagram can amplify reach and credibility. Influencers can create authentic content that promotes the business to a broader audience, driving engagement and conversions.

**Enhance Customer Feedback Mechanisms:** Encouraging satisfied customers to leave testimonials and share their positive experiences on Instagram can boost credibility and influence potential customers. Businesses should actively seek and showcase customer feedback.

**Continuous Engagement and Interaction:** Maintaining an active presence on Instagram by regularly posting content, engaging with followers through comments and direct messages, and hosting interactive sessions like live videos and Q&A sessions can foster a loyal community.

**Optimise Instagram Features:** Businesses should make full use of Instagram's features, such as stories, IGTV, and shopping tags, to provide a seamless and engaging experience for their audience. These features can help showcase products more effectively and drive sales directly from the platform.

**Conduct Regular Assessments:** Periodic evaluation of marketing strategies through surveys and feedback from followers can provide insights into what is working and what needs improvement. This proactive approach allows businesses to stay aligned with customer preferences and market trends.

By implementing these recommendations, female-owned businesses in Lagos can maximise the potential of Instagram videos to drive engagement, growth, and long-term success. The study underscores the transformative power of social media marketing and provides a roadmap for leveraging Instagram as a strategic tool for entrepreneurial development.

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### CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

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