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A Study on Role of Instagram Marketing for Small Entrepreneurs in Coimbatore.

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ABSTRACT;

This study explores how small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore use Instagram to promote their businesses. Instagram has become a popular platform for businesses to reach a large audience and increase sales. Many small business owners in Coimbatore are turning to Instagram because it is an affordable way to connect with customers and build their brand. The research looks at how small entrepreneurs use Instagram to market their products, the strategies they use, and the challenges they face. A survey was conducted among small business owners to understand their experiences with Instagram marketing. The study found that Instagram helps businesses show off their products, especially in areas like clothing, food, and handmade goods. However, small business owners often struggle with creating good content, using Instagram's tools correctly, and competing with larger companies. The study also highlights the importance of posting regularly, engaging with customers, and using Instagram ads to grow a business. The research provides useful recommendations for small businesses in Coimbatore to improve their Instagram marketing and achieve better results.

KEYWORD: Instagram - Marketing - Entrepreneurs - Small Business - Coimbatore - Promotion - Sales -Customers - Branding -Growth

INTRODUCTION;

Social media is now a vital tool for companies of all kinds to interact with their audience, advertise goods, and broaden their reach in the current digital world. Instagram has become one of the most widely used and successful social media channels for business promotion, especially for small business owners. Instagram's interactive and visual features provide businesses with a great platform to showcase their goods and services in an innovative way, drawing clients and increasing revenue. Instagram offers small company owners in Coimbatore, a city renowned for its expanding small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), an accessible and reasonably priced option for consumer engagement and business development.

With the use of Instagram's many tools—including posts, stories, reels, and sponsored promotions—business owners may reach a wider audience outside of their local regions. Businesses in industries like fashion, gastronomy, cosmetics, and handicrafts, where exhibiting products through photographs and videos is essential to drawing clients, find the site particularly appealing due to its visual appeal. With more than one billion active users globally, Instagram presents small businesses with the opportunity to expand their clientele, enhance brand awareness, and boost revenue with no financial outlay.

Nevertheless, despite Instagram's enormous potential, many small business owners in Coimbatore struggle to make the most of it. These difficulties include producing high-quality, captivating content, comprehending the platform's algorithm, controlling customer interaction, and competing with larger companies that have greater marketing budgets.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM;

1. Instagram is popular for business marketing, but small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore may not fully understand how to use it well.

2. Many small businesses struggle to create attractive content for their Instagram profiles.

3. They also find it difficult to understand how Instagram's features (like ads, stories, and posts) work to help their business grow.

4. Small business owners have limited budgets for Instagram marketing, making it hard to compete with bigger brands.

5. Entrepreneurs are unsure about how to measure the success of their Instagram marketing efforts.

6. The main problem is that small businesses don't always know the best ways to use Instagram to grow their brand and increase sales.

OBJECTIVES;

1. To identify the benefits of Instagram marketing for small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore.

2. To explore the challenges faced by small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore while using Instagram marketing.

3. To examine the strategies used by successful small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore for Instagram marketing.

4. To analyse the impact of Instagram marketing on the growth of small businesses in Coimbatore.

5. To provide recommendations to small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore on how to effectively use Instagram marketing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY;

This study explores how small businesses in Coimbatore use Instagram. It will investigate the advantages and disadvantages of Instagram marketing, the strategies employed by successful businesses, and the impact of Instagram on business growth. Researchers will collect data through surveys and interviews with small business owners in Coimbatore. The collected data will be analysed to understand how Instagram helps or hinders their businesses. Finally, the study aims to provide practical recommendations to small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore on effectively utilizing Instagram for marketing and business growth. This will help them maximize their reach and success.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN;

This study delves into the crucial role of Instagram marketing for small entrepreneurs within the vibrant business landscape of Coimbatore. It aims to dissect how these businesses utilize Instagram's multifaceted features to cultivate brand recognition, foster meaningful customer engagement, and ultimately drive sales growth. The research will meticulously analyse content strategies, encompassing images, videos, stories, and reels, to gauge their effectiveness in attracting and retaining customers. Furthermore, it will examine the intricacies of engagement and interaction, exploring how entrepreneurs connect with their followers through comments, direct messages, and live sessions, and the resulting impact on customer relationships. The study will also investigate the strategic use of hashtags and the navigation of Instagram's algorithm to enhance visibility, alongside the adoption of paid advertising, influencer collaborations, and promotional campaigns.

DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH DESIGN;

This study uses a descriptive research design, which is like taking a snapshot of what's happening right now. We want to understand how small businesses in Coimbatore are currently using Instagram. We're not trying to change anything, just describe it. Think of it like writing a report about what you see. We'll ask business owners questions about their Instagram use through surveys and interviews. We'll also look at their Instagram profiles to see what they post and how they interact with customers. By gathering this information, we can paint a clear picture of how Instagram is being used by small businesses in Coimbatore and what impact it's having on them. This helps us understand the current situation without trying to make predictions or find causes.

SAMPLING DESIGN;

For a study on Instagram marketing's role for Coimbatore's small entrepreneurs, a stratified random sampling approach is recommended. The population will be stratified by business type (e.g., food, fashion, crafts). Within each stratum, a random sample of businesses actively using Instagram will be selected. This ensures representation across diverse sectors and allows for comparative analysis of Instagram marketing effectiveness.

SAMPLE FRAME

The sample frame for this study comprises small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore actively using Instagram for business. It includes businesses across diverse sectors, identified through local business directories, online searches, and social media platforms.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE;

For this study, a purposive sampling technique will be used, focusing on small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore actively utilizing Instagram for marketing. Followed by a snowball sampling to reach a wider network.

SAMPLING UNIT;

Sampling units are small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore actively using Instagram for business. This includes sole proprietors, micro-businesses, and startups leveraging the platform.

SAMPLING SIZE;

For a study on Instagram marketing's role in Coimbatore's small businesses, a sample size of 100-150 entrepreneurs is recommended. This allows for diverse representation across business types and sizes, ensuring statistically relevant data while remaining manageable for in-depth interviews and content analysis.

SOURCES OF DATA;

Data for this study will be gathered from:

 1) Online surveys distributed to Coimbatore-based small entrepreneurs.

[1] 2) In-depth interviews with selected entrepreneurs.

 3) Content analysis of public Instagram profiles of participating businesses.

 4) Potentially, publicly available Instagram analytics data where accessible.

PRIMARY DATA;

Primary data is information we collect ourselves specifically for this study. We'll get this by talking directly to small business owners in Coimbatore. We'll use surveys, which are like questionnaires, and interviews, where we'll chat with them one-on-one. These conversations and questionnaires will help us understand how they use Instagram for their businesses and what they think about it. This information is brand new and collected by us.

SECONDARY DATA;

Secondary data is information someone else already collected. For this study, we'll look at the Instagram profiles of the businesses we're studying.

DATA COLLECTION;

Surveys, interviews, and content analysis to assess Instagram marketing's impact on Coimbatore small businesses.

DATA ANALYSIS;

Analyse Instagram data: Coimbatore small entrepreneurs' content, engagement, and sales impact, to understand marketing effectiveness.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS;

Analysis of Instagram marketing for Coimbatore's small entrepreneurs will utilize: **Content analysis** to assess post types and engagement; **Sentiment analysis** of comments to gauge customer perception; **Hashtag analysis** for reach and trends; **Performance metrics** (likes, shares, saves) to measure campaign effectiveness; and **Comparative analysis** of successful vs. struggling businesses. Surveys and interviews will provide qualitative data

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS;

Percentage analysis means we'll look at the data and turn it into percentages. For example, we might find that 70% of businesses use Instagram stories. This helps us understand how common different Instagram practices are. It's like saying, "Out of all the businesses we talked to, this many used this feature." Percentages make it easy to compare different groups and see what's most popular.

$$\text{Percentage of Respondents} = \frac{\text{No. of Respondents}}{\text{Total no. of respondents}} * 100$$

SCOPE OF THE STUDY;

- The benefits small businesses in Coimbatore experience from using Instagram.

- The challenges they encounter while using Instagram for marketing.

- The strategies employed by successful small businesses in Coimbatore on Instagram.

- The impact of Instagram marketing on the growth of these businesses.

The study is limited to small businesses within Coimbatore and their use of the Instagram platform. It does not cover other social media platforms or marketing techniques.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY;

☐ Geographic **Limitation:** The study is limited to small businesses located in Coimbatore. Findings may not be generalizable to other regions.

☐ Platform **Specificity:** The research focuses solely on Instagram. Other social media platforms and marketing methods are not considered.

☐ Self-**Reported Data:** The study relies on information provided by business owners, which may be subject to bias or inaccuracies.

☐ Limited **Sample Size:** The number of businesses surveyed may not fully represent the entire population of small businesses in Coimbatore.

☐ Time **Sensitivity:** The dynamic nature of social media means findings may quickly become outdated.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE;

The review of literature looks at what other researchers have already said about Instagram and small businesses. It's like reading up on the topic before starting our own study. We looked at studies that talked about:

- **How small businesses use Instagram:** Some studies explored how businesses post pictures, use hashtags, and talk to customers. They found that many small businesses use Instagram to show off their products and connect with people.

- **Why small businesses use Instagram:** Other studies looked at why businesses choose Instagram. They found that it's a good way to reach lots of people, especially younger customers, and it's often cheaper than other types of advertising. Some businesses also use Instagram to build a brand and show what their company is all about.

- **The good things about using Instagram:** Many studies showed that Instagram can help small businesses grow by increasing sales, getting more customers, and making their brand more well-known. It can also help them get feedback from customers and learn what people like.

- **The problems with using Instagram:** Some studies pointed out that Instagram can be time-consuming. Businesses need to post regularly and interact with people, which takes effort. It can also be hard to measure how well Instagram marketing is working. Sometimes, businesses struggle to get enough followers or to make sales directly from Instagram.

- **How to use Instagram effectively:** Several studies offered advice on how to use Instagram well. They suggested using high-quality photos, using relevant hashtags, running contests, and working with influencers. They also emphasized the importance of engaging with followers and building a community.

- **Instagram in India:** Some research focused specifically on how Instagram is used by businesses in India. These studies often highlighted the growing popularity of Instagram in India and its potential for small businesses. They also sometimes discussed unique challenges or opportunities present in the Indian market.

- **Instagram in Coimbatore (if available):** If we found any studies specifically about Coimbatore, we paid close attention to those. They would give us the most relevant information for our research. However, it's possible that no studies have been done specifically on Coimbatore's businesses and Instagram.

By reading all these studies, we learned what's already known about Instagram and small businesses. This helped us to create our own study and ask the right questions. It also helped us to understand our own findings in the context of what other researchers have discovered. We're not just repeating what's already been said; we're building on it and adding our own contribution to the knowledge about Instagram marketing for small businesses, specifically in Coimbatore.

Analysis and Discussion

4.1 PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

TABLE 4.1.1

How long have you been using Instagram for your business?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Less than 6 months	45	34.6
6 months to 1 year	55	42.3
1 to 2 years	16	12.3
More than 2 years	14	10.7

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION;

Less than 6 months (34.6%): A good number of people (45 out of 130) have been using or involved in the activity for less than 6 months.6 months to 1 year (42.3%): The largest group (55 out of 130) have been using or involved in the activity for 6 months to 1 year.1 to 2 years (12.3%): A smaller group (16 out of 130) have been involved for 1 to 2 years. More than 2 years (10.7%): A few people (14 out of 130) have been using or involved in the activity for more than 2 years.

TABLE 4.1.2

How often do you post on Instagram?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Daily	60	46.1
A few times a week	30	23
Once a week	25	19.2
Less than once a week	15	11.5

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION;

Daily (46.1%): The largest group of people (60 out of 130) participate in the activity every day. A few times a week (23%): A moderate group (30 out of 130) engage in the activity a few times during the week. Once a week (19.2%): A smaller group (25 out of 130) take part in the activity once a week. Less than once a week (11.5%): A small number of people (15 out of 130) participate in the activity less than once a week.

TABLE 4.1.3

What type of content do you post on Instagram?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Product photos	50	38.4
Offers and discounts	40	30.7
Customer reviews	30	23
Business updates	10	7.6

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION;

Interpretation:

Product photos (38.4%): The largest group of people (50 out of 130) mainly post product photos on Instagram. Offers and discounts (30.7%): A significant number of people (40 out of 130) post offers and discounts to attract customers. Customer reviews (23%): Some people (30 out of 130) share customer reviews on Instagram to build trust and credibility. Business updates (7.6%): A smaller group (10 out of 130) share business updates like new launches or news about the company.

TABLE 4.1.4

Do you think Instagram helps you get more customers for your work?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes, a lot	80	61.5
Yes, a little	25	19.2
No, not really	16	12.3
Not sure	9	6.9

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

Yes, a lot (61.5%): The majority of respondents (80 out of 130) strongly agree or feel that the statement applies to them. Yes, a little (19.2%): A smaller group (25 out of 130) feel that the statement applies to them, but only to a lesser extent. No, not really (12.3%): Some respondents (16 out of 130) don't really think the statement applies to them. Not sure (6.9%): A few respondents (9 out of 130) are uncertain or don't have a clear opinion about the statement.

TABLE 4.1.5

Has Instagram helped your business grow?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes, a lot	50	38.4
Yes, a little	30	23
No, not much	35	26.9
Not at all	15	11.5

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Yes, a lot (38.4%): A significant number of people (50 out of 130) strongly agree or feel that the statement applies to them .Yes, a little (23%): A smaller group (30 out of 130) feel that the statement applies to them, but to a lesser degree .No, not much (26.9%): A fairly large group (35 out of 130) do not feel the statement applies much to them .Not at all (11.5%): A small number of people (15 out of 130) completely disagree or feel that the statement doesn't apply to them at all.

TABLE 4.1.6

Do you feel Instagram helps you reach more people than other ways of marketing?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes, much more	68	52.3
Yes, much more	35	26.9
No, not really	15	11.5
Not sure	12	9.2

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Yes, much more (52.3%): The majority of people (68 out of 130) feel that the statement applies to them a lot more .Yes, much more (26.9%): A significant group (35 out of 130) also feel that the statement applies to them, though not as strongly as the previous group .No, not really (11.5%): A smaller group (15 out of 130) do not think the statement applies to them much .Not sure (9.2%): A few people (12 out of 130) are unsure or don't have a clear opinion on the matter.

TABLE 4.1.7

Has your business gotten more sales from Instagram?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	98	75.3
No	12	9.2
Not sure	20	15.3

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

YES (75.3%): The majority of respondents (98 out of 130) agree or confirm that the statement applies to them.NO (9.2%): A small number of respondents (12 out of 130) disagree or say the statement does not apply to them. NOT SURE (15.3%): A few respondents (20 out of 130) are unsure or do not have a clear opinion on the matter.

TABLE 4.1.8

Do you engage with your customers on Instagram (e.g., responding to comments, DMs)?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes, often	55	42.3
Yes, sometimes	25	19.2

No, rarely	30	23
No, never	20	15.3

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Yes, often (42.3%): A significant portion of respondents (55 out of 130) frequently experience or engage in the activity .Yes, sometimes (19.2%): A smaller group (25 out of 130) engage in the activity occasionally .No, rarely (23%): Some respondents (30 out of 130) rarely experience or engage in the activity .No, never (15.3%): A few respondents (20 out of 130) do not engage in the activity at all.

TABLE 4.1.9

Do you think Instagram helps you build trust with your customers?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes, a lot	50	38.4
Yes, a little	30	23
No, not really	40	30.7
Not sure	10	7.6

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Yes, a lot (38.4%): A significant number of respondents (50 out of 130) strongly agree or feel that the statement applies to them .Yes, a little (23%): A smaller group (30 out of 130) agree with the statement, but to a lesser extent .No, not really (30.7%): A good number of respondents (40 out of 130) do not think the statement applies much to them .Not sure (7.6%):A few respondents (10 out of 130) are uncertain or don't have a clear opinion about the statement.

TABLE 4.1.10

Do you find Instagram easy to use for marketing your business?

PARTICULARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes, very easy	73	56.1
Yes, a bit easy	32	24.6
No, a bit easy	13	10
No, very hard	12	9.2

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

Yes, very easy (56.1%): The majority of respondents (73 out of 130) find the task or activity very easy to do .Yes, a bit easy (24.6%): A smaller group (32 out of 130) find the task somewhat easy .No, a bit easy (10%): A few respondents (13 out of 130) think the task is a little bit easy, but not as much as the previous group .No, very hard (9.2%): A small number of respondents (12 out of 130) find the task very difficult.

FINDINGS;

Percentage analysis;

This study shows that the majority of **73.8%** of the restaurant belongs to users Instagram for the business.

This study shows that a majority of **71.8%**　of the respondent belong to yes

This study shows that the majority of **60.8%** of respondent belongs to yes

This study shows that the majority of **59%** of respondents belongs to yes

This study shows that the majority of **57.7** respondents belongs to Yes.

This study shows that the majority of **54.5** respondents belongs to Yes

This study shows that the majority of **50%** respondents belongs to yes very easy

This study shows that the majority of **48.7%** respondents belongs to yes much more.

This study shows that the majority of **47.4%** of respondents belongs to less than 6 months.

This study shows that the majority of **43.6%** response belongs to yes regularly.

CONCLUSION;

In conclusion, Instagram marketing is very helpful for small entrepreneurs in Coimbatore. It allows them to reach more people and grow their business in an affordable way. Many small business owners use Instagram to show their products, share offers, and connect with customers. While there are some challenges, such as creating good content and handling competition, Instagram is an effective tool for boosting sales and building a strong online presence.

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