

Factors Influencing the Growth and Business Performance of Women Entrepreneurs in the Fashion Industry: Evidence from Coimbatore and Tirupur

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Abstract

Women entrepreneurship has become a major economic aspect, source of employment, and innovations in the fashion sector, particularly in such fashion textile consuming regions of Coimbatore and Tirupur in Tamil Nadu. Women entrepreneurs have added much value to the fashion industry through clothing production, running of the boutiques, and services related to fashion. Nevertheless, their success and the development of their businesses depends on a great number of structural, technological, and socio-economic factors. It is worth knowing these things that influence people to make policy interventions and support systems that are working. Against this backdrop, this research is aimed at establishing the key influences on the growth and business success of women producers of fashion in Coimbatore and Tirupur. The study is founded on the first-hand information about 387 fashion businesswomen who participated in a descriptive research method. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. It was completed by people, who were required to rank various factors that influenced the development and performance of their business. These factors were examined using the Henry Garrett Ranking Method which ranked them based on the level of importance they had. To support the study, second hand data were sampled in journals, papers and government publications. The findings indicate that rivalry with large companies and web sites was the factor that had the greatest influence on the success of a business. This was proceeded by the application of digital marketing and e-commerce, and government support programs and funds. The research concludes that in order to grow and remain in the business, women entrepreneurs in the fashion sector in Coimbatore and Tirupur must enhance the level of their digital skills, enhance the competitiveness aspects of their business and ensure that both the institutional and social contexts they are operating in are conducive.

Keywords: Economic Growth, Entrepreneur, Women, Fashion, Business

Introduction

Fashion and textile business is a significant segment of India economy since it provides employment, receives money through exports, and increases the level of industrial production. Women entrepreneurs

have emerged as key stakeholders in transforming the economy by initiating new ideas in this industry and ensuring that people have a means of livelihood. Coimbatore and Tirupur are the Tamil Nadu cities that specialize in textile manufacturing. They comprise together one of the most vital clothing and knitwear production regions in India. Tirupur has been referred to as the knitwear capital of India, it exports approximately 90 percent of the cotton knitwear in India. Instead, Coimbatore concentrates on the manufacturing of textiles, spinning mills and garments, as well as, making clothes. Although the region is a large industrial centre, the number of challenges that women business owners in the fashion industry continue to encounter is still considerable and contributes to a slower growth rate and the performance of their businesses.

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in women owned businesses in India. They are predicted to constitute 33 percent of all businesses (Gupta, 2025) of the current 20 percent by 2030. The reason behind this upward trend is the existence of broader phenomena in the life of the society and the economy, including the increased rates of literacy, liberal access to digital tools, and more liberal government policies. Nevertheless, female business people continue to encounter institutional issues that complicate the process of keeping their businesses in operation and expanding. Female entrepreneurs in the fashion sector are of particular interest to observe due to the fact that it is simple to enter the business and there is ample scope of innovativeness, talent, and market sensitivity to make a difference. In order to develop specific interventions that could ensure women-led companies in Coimbatore and Tirupur can achieve their potential, one must be aware of what influences their development and business performance.

The business environment facing women in the fashion industry is unique due to the existence of a lot of various internal and external factors. Internal factors include entrepreneurial skills, schooling, risk-taking, willingness as well as personal drive. Conversely, external factors include access to finance, market network, government favor, social and cultural values and technological infrastructure (Nayak et al., 2021). As per the research conducted by Kanchan and Sangal (2025), women in the MSME sector are likely to succeed in their business provided they possess good entrepreneurial and managerial skills. With these competencies, women will be able to cope with practical issues, make strategic decisions and adapt to the evolving market environment. Formal training programs and mentorship opportunities, on the one hand, tend to be scarce to develop and train these skills.

Need for the Study

The business owners in Coimbatore and Tirupur have both opportunities and challenges with the fashion business. The supply lines are well established, the workers are skilled and the raw materials are easily accessible which makes the area a good place to start up a business. Women entrepreneurs in this industry have an enormous variety of activities, including, but not limited to operating boutiques and providing embroidery services, creating clothes and purchasing digital fashion (Rao et al., 2012). Despite these opportunities, they have massive issues such as lack of sufficient access to capital, lack of awareness of government programs, inability to exploit technology effectively, and social and cultural limitations that inhibit their mobility and self-determination (Behra, 2021). Combining these factors, the situation becomes complex and requires an in-depth knowledge and a wide-range of policy-making.

Literature Review

The most significant and the most enduring issue women fashion businesses experience is the inability to access sufficient money. Businesses run on financial capital. It enables them to start up and purchase

inventory and tools, and continue on. Although financial exclusion is always identified to be the primary obstacle in constraining the potential of women-led businesses in India (Nayak et al., 202). Women entrepreneurs find money difficult due to lack of access to official credit, the high collateral that they must provide, the prejudice of lending institutions against women and have to depend on informal sources of finance.

The inaccessibility to capital has been demonstrated to damage the plans of people who intend to start their own businesses as well as the outcomes of the businesses. Research indicates that the lack of access to money would reduce the tendency of people to establish their own business and worsen the performance of businesses with access to it (Shukla et al., 2021). With the help of this research, it becomes easy to understand the necessity to eliminate financial obstacles prior to the achievement of success by entrepreneurs. In cases where the women entrepreneurs can access finance via formal means then their businesses perform better. As an illustration, they earn higher salaries, increase their sales, and conduct their enterprises more effectively. However, much of the money available to women businesses continues to be unofficial, such as family loans, personal savings and rotating savings groups. This is due to the fact that they do not believe in formal institutions and they have been rejected by banks previously.

Microfinance has also emerged as a significant alternative source of money by the women entrepreneurs who experience difficulty accessing normal banking facilities. Microfinance institutions (MFIs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and Joint Liability Groups have provided this access to women and led to much more access to loans, savings accounts, and insurance services (Fazalbhoy et al., 2021). It has been demonstrated through case studies that microfinance has assisted women to begin or expand their activities in tailoring, handcrafts and clothing production among others. This has boosted the family income and assisted women to be educated about money. Microfinance has implications which extend beyond economic outcomes. It builds a strong community relationship, cultivates leadership and reduces gender-related risks within communities.

Technical skills in the fashion business involve the knowledge on how to sew clothes, create patterns, select fabrics, quality checks and production management. Most of the female entrepreneurs have trained informally in craftsmanship through apprenticeship or in the family environment, yet they lack official technical training to expand their enterprises or employ more modern modes of production (Rao et al., 2012). There exists a disparity between the conventional skills and the demands of the new industries. It becomes difficult to maintain the quality standards, export standards, and compete in the quality market segments. Development and education programs in entrepreneurship have been observed to boost sales and generate employment. Self-confidence and intelligent thinking also increase significantly amongst the participants (Rinki & Nandal, 202).

Besides cash schemes, the government has invested much money in programs that assist individuals to acquire new skills and develop their abilities. Skill India Mission has quite a number of programs, including the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) that provides short-term training and licensing in numerous areas, including textiles and clothing. Through these programs, millions of people have been benefited and yet we should further examine their impact on women who are willing to initiate their own business in the fashion industry. According to Rinki and Nandal (2025), the best programs are those that involve technical training plus lessons on how to be a business, how to deal with money, and how to connect with markets.

Statement of the Problem

Indian fashion and textile industries highly depend on women entrepreneurs particularly in the established textile hubs such as Coimbatore and Tirupur. Nonetheless, not many women-owned fashion enterprises continue to grow and be successful, despite the increase in the number of women entering the industries and the aid of the policies. These companies operate in a dynamically evolving business environment which comprises of stiff competition by large brands and online services, increasing dependency on virtual marketing and e-commerce, institutional and governmental constraints, skill deficit, and societal and cultural responsibilities. Current literature on women entrepreneurs considers the issues individually or at a bigger scale. There does not exist much evidence, which examines the influences of the business growth and business performance through the lens of women entrepreneurs in particular areas. Focused policy interventions and support systems do not work so effectively when these prioritized insights are not available. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to identify and rank the most significant variables that influence the development and business performance of women fashion entrepreneurs in Coimbatore and Tirupur. It will contribute to the creation of better entrepreneurial ecosystems as well as promote the long-term development of female-owned businesses.

Objectives of the Study

To identify the factors that influence the growth and business performance of women entrepreneurs in the fashion industry in Coimbatore and Tirupur.

Research Methodology

The implementation of the research is descriptive since the aim is to discover and comprehend the key factors influencing the growth and business success of fashion design women entrepreneurs. Descriptive research suits well in tabulating the desirable characteristics of a community, and placing in sequence the factors influencing people according to the perceptions of the respondents. It is designed in such a way that the numerical data required to apply the Henry Garrett Ranking Technique is collected. The method applied in this study is known as, purposive sampling and the respondents answering this particular method were selected selectively amongst women in business who operated businesses related to fashion such as clothing factories, clothing boutiques and tailoring shops and also fashion design companies. They were asked only to the women business owners operating in Coimbatore and Tirupur currently to ensure that the answers were relevant and correct. The sample area of the study is comprised of Coimbatore and Tirupur which are two of the most significant textile and clothing centers in the state of Tamil Nadu. The selection of these places is due to the fact that they are having numerous fashion businesses owned by women, and they support the local fashion industry. Those who responded were women entrepreneurs in such locations who are employed in various sections of the fashion value chain. The study sample consisted of 387 female entrepreneurs. It was believed that the sample was large enough to represent the entire population and offer the correct findings in applying the Henry Garrett Ranking Method to rank the factors that influenced the outcome. The study involved first hand information acquired through an organized questionnaire. In one section of the questionnaire, individuals were required to rank the things that they believed influenced the growth and performance of their business in terms of how they considered them to be important. In order to support the conceptual framework and literature review, the secondary data were collected using government reports, books, journals, and publications. The Henry Garrett Ranking Method was applied to determine which of the most influential factors on the development of

women entrepreneurship and their successful business could be given the most attention. The respondents were requested to rank the provided factors, and Garrett ranking formula was applied and converted the numbers into scores. The mean scores were calculated for each factor, and the factors were ranked based on their average Garrett scores. This method helps in identifying the most critical determinants affecting women entrepreneurs in the fashion industry in Coimbatore and Tirupur.

Results and Discussion

The various factors influencing the growth and business performance of women entrepreneurs in the fashion industry in Coimbatore and Tirupur were analysed through Henry Garrett Ranking Method. The factors includes ‘Access to finance and credit facilities’, Availability of Skilled labour’, ‘Market access and customer reach’, ‘Digital marketing and e-commerce adoption’, ‘Managerial and entrepreneurial skills’, ‘Technology adoption in production and design’, ‘Government support schemes and subsidies’, ‘Supply chain and raw material availability’, ‘Family support and work-life balance’, and ‘Competition from large brands and online platforms’.

Number of Respondents who ranked the Factors

Table No 1 : Frequency of Influencing Factors

Factors/Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
F1 - Access to finance and credit facilities	20	21	20	31	46	44	46	46	56	57
F2 - Availability of skilled labour	33	30	43	48	47	51	49	48	20	18
F3 - Market access and customer reach	48	43	47	15	21	35	34	45	53	46
F4 - Digital marketing and e-commerce adoption	43	61	64	57	43	44	23	10	18	24
F5 - Managerial and entrepreneurial skills	49	44	48	48	31	29	17	31	40	50
F6 - Technology adoption in production and design	47	48	20	20	21	26	50	62	46	47
F7 - Government support schemes and subsidies	23	61	56	51	46	48	53	14	18	17
F8 - Supply chain and raw material availability	47	15	18	14	22	45	53	63	61	49
F9 - Family support and work-life balance	48	45	45	62	57	19	18	19	26	48
F10 - Competition from large brands and online platforms	29	19	26	41	53	46	44	49	49	31

Source : Primary Source

Percent position = $100(R_{ij}-0.5)/N_j$

R_{ij} = 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th ranks

N_j = Total rank given by 387 respondents = 10

Table No 2 : Percent Position Table of Influencing Factors

Rank	100(Rij-0.5)	Percent position
1	100(1-0.5)/10	5
2	100(2-0.5)/10	15
3	100(3-0.5)/10	25
4	100(4-0.5)/10	35
5	100(5-0.5)/10	45
6	100(6-0.5)/10	55
7	100(7-0.5)/10	65
8	100(8-0.5)/10	75
9	100(9-0.5)/10	85
10	100(10-0.5)/10	95

Source : Primary Source

From Henry Garret table, Garret value is found for the percent position

Table No 3 : Garret Value Table of Influencing factors

Rank	Percent position value	Garret Value
1	5	82
2	15	70
3	25	63
4	35	58
5	45	52
6	55	48
7	65	42
8	75	36
9	85	29
10	95	18

Source : Primary Source

For each rank, garret value is multiplied by given value in the table

Table No 4 : Garret Score Calculation

Requirements /Rank	1*82	2*70	3*63	4*58	5*52	6*48	7*42	8*36	9*29	10*18
F1 - Access to finance and credit facilities	1640	1470	1260	1798	2392	2112	1932	1656	1624	1026
F2 - Availability of skilled labour	2706	2100	2709	2784	2444	2448	2058	1728	580	324
F3 - Market access and customer reach	3936	3010	2961	870	1092	1680	1428	1620	1537	828
F4 - Digital marketing and e-commerce adoption	3526	4270	4032	3306	2236	2112	966	360	522	432
F5 - Managerial and entrepreneurial skills	4018	3080	3024	2784	1612	1392	714	1116	1160	900

F6 - Technology adoption in production and design	3854	3360	1260	1160	1092	1248	2100	2232	1334	846
F7 - Government support schemes and subsidies	1886	4270	3528	2958	2392	2304	2226	504	522	306
F8 - Supply chain and raw material availability	3854	1050	1134	812	1144	2160	2226	2268	1769	882
F9 - Family support and work-life balance	3936	3150	2835	3596	2964	912	756	684	754	864
F10 - Competition from large brands and online platforms	2378	1330	1638	2378	2756	2208	1848	1764	1421	558

Source : Primary Source

All the calculated values are totalled row wise

Table No 5 : Total sum of weighted values

Factor /Rank	1*82	2*70	3*63	4*58	5*52	6*48	7*42	8*36	9*29	10*18	Total
F1	1640	1470	1260	1798	2392	2112	1932	1656	1624	1026	16910
F2	2706	2100	2709	2784	2444	2448	2058	1728	580	324	19881
F3	3936	3010	2961	870	1092	1680	1428	1620	1537	828	18962
F4	3526	4270	4032	3306	2236	2112	966	360	522	432	21762
F5	4018	3080	3024	2784	1612	1392	714	1116	1160	900	19800
F6	3854	3360	1260	1160	1092	1248	2100	2232	1334	846	18486
F7	1886	4270	3528	2958	2392	2304	2226	504	522	306	20896
F8	3854	1050	1134	812	1144	2160	2226	2268	1769	882	17299
F9	3936	3150	2835	3596	2964	912	756	684	754	864	20451
F10	2378	1330	1638	2378	2756	2208	1848	1764	1421	558	21975

Source : Primary Source

The total score is divided by number of respondents to calculate average score, then rank the highest average score as I and the least average score with Rank X.

Table No 6: Henry Garret Ranking of Factors influencing Business growth and Performance

Factors	Total	Average Score	Rank
F1	16910/387	43.6950904	X
F2	19881/387	51.372093	V
F3	18962/387	48.997416	VII
F4	21762/387	56.2325581	II
F5	19800/387	51.1627907	VI

F6	18486/387	47.7674419	VIII
F7	20896/387	53.994832	III
F8	17299/387	44.7002584	IX
F9	20451/387	52.8449612	IV
F10	21975/387	56.7829457	I

Source : Primary Source

The Henry Garrett Ranking analysis was employed to identify and prioritise the factors influencing the growth and business performance of women entrepreneurs in the fashion industry in Coimbatore and Tirupur. The results reveal that competition from large brands and online platforms (F10) emerged as the most critical influencing factor, securing the first rank with the highest average Garrett score (56.78). This indicates that intense competition from established brands and digital marketplaces poses a major challenge to the sustainability and growth of women-owned fashion enterprises in the study area.

The second and second ranked are the adoption of digital marketing and e-commerce (F4) with an average score of 56.23. This is an indication of the growing significance of online presence, online promotion and internet marketing websites to businesses to access more customers and perform better. This is an indication of the evolvement of the fashion industry because digital skills are significant determinants of how competitive businesses become. Third place was the government support schemes and subsidies (F7) with the mean score at 53.99. This implies that the ability to obtain policy assistance, financial resources and institutional support is a large component of assisting women to become entrepreneurs.

Family support and work life balance (F9) was ranked fourth with an average of 52.84 and it indicates the social and personal issues women entrepreneurs encounter as they attempt to balance work and family. The fifth position was assigned to Availability of skilled labor (F2), which appeared to be 51.37, which reflects the fact that, even in the fashion industry, the issue of being able to find a staff, which is trained and reliable, remains a significant challenge. Managerial and entrepreneurial skills (F5) were the sixth-ranked (51.16) one that demonstrates that women businesspeople must enhance their ability to lead, make decisions, and manage a business.

Market access and customer reach (F3) was also at number seven (48.99) and technology adoption in production and design (F6) was also at number eight (47.77). This implies that these factors are contributing to business performance, although, they are perceived to have less significance as compared to digital and competitive challenges. The ninth place was obtained by supply chain and raw material supply (F8) with the result of 44.70, meaning that it is not a significant concern of buyers and shippers. Finally, the availability of finance and credit facilities (F1) scored lowestly (43.69), which indicates that access to finance is perceived to be lower among other practical and competitive considerations in the study area, although still significant.

Findings reveal that external competitive forces and digital transformation factors affect the development and business performance of women entrepreneurs in the fashion industry in Coimbatore and Tirupur bigger than the traditional barriers such as money and supply chain issues.

Conclusion

The research concludes that competitive, technological, institutional and social-personal forces have a contribution to the growth and business prosperity of women fashion entrepreneurs in Coimbatore and Tirupur. According to the Henry Garrett Ranking analysis, rivalry with large brands and online stores, the

utilization of digital marketing and e-commerce are the most significant variables that influence the performance of the business. This demonstrates that women-led businesses must increase their online competence in order to remain competitive. The role of government programs as well as family support is also significant, demonstrating that the support of women-led businesses in terms of formal assistance and social support is crucial. Issues such as access to skilled labor, the management skills, and use of the new technologies, among others, impact growth moderately. Conversely, old issues such as the unavailability of finance and supply chain issues were considered less significant in the research field. In general, the findings indicate that the fashion industry is transforming. To enable women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore and Tirupur that are assuming a fashion center to grow and remain in business, they must be open to change, which is digital, have the ability to compete, as well as, be supported by resourceful ecosystems.

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