

The Influence of Social Media Engagement on Entrepreneurial Intention in Cotabato City

Xylon Keanu C. Hong, Catlyn O. Pongot, DBA, MPA, Ma. Theresa P. Llano, PhD

Graduate School – Master of Business Administration (MBA)

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of social media engagement on entrepreneurial intention among residents of Cotabato City. Guided by Social Media Engagement Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study assessed social media engagement in terms of behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions, and entrepreneurial intention in terms of attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed, with data collected from 385 respondents. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and simple linear regression were used to analyze the data.

The findings revealed that respondents exhibited high levels of social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention. Regression results indicated that social media engagement has a statistically significant but very weak positive influence on entrepreneurial intention, explaining only a small proportion of its variance. Attitude toward entrepreneurship and subjective norms were high, while perceived behavioral control was moderate.

The results suggest that social media primarily functions as a source of entrepreneurial exposure rather than a strong determinant of entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurial intention appears to be more strongly associated with psychological factors such as attitudes, social influence, and perceived capability. A social media-Supported Entrepreneurial Intention Framework is proposed, highlighting the role of social media engagement as a contextual and enabling factor.

Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of strengthening individuals' skills, confidence, and access to resources to support entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: Affective Engagement, Behavioral Engagement, Cognitive Engagement, Entrepreneurial Intention, Social Media Engagement, Social Media Engagement Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a key driver of economic development, as it promotes innovation, job creation, and increased productivity. Cultivating entrepreneurial intention is therefore essential, as it enables individuals to identify opportunities, establish enterprises, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable economic progress. Entrepreneurial intention refers to an individual's motivation and willingness to start a business by recognizing opportunities and utilizing resources effectively (Daryanto, 2012; Bui et al., 2020, as cited in Chaniago & Sayuti, 2022), and it is widely regarded as a strong predictor of future entrepreneurial behavior (Krueger et al., 2000; Krueger, 2007; Obschonka et al., 2010; Do & Dadvari, 2017, as cited in Do, Dadvari, & Moslehpour, 2020). The Theory of Planned Behavior explains entrepreneurial intention through three key components: attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

In today's digital environment, social media has emerged as a significant influence on entrepreneurial intention. It has evolved from a platform primarily used for entertainment into a powerful tool for communication, learning,

and entrepreneurship (Mallios et al., 2023; Hussein Alayis et al., 2018). Social media enables individuals to build networks, acquire knowledge, and identify business opportunities through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok (Mallios et al., 2023; Hussein Alayis et al., 2018). It also supports real-time interaction, feedback, and relationship-building (Solem, 2016; Sashi, 2012, as cited in Tajpour & Hosseini, 2021), while providing access to tutorials, informal education, and networking opportunities (Sukumar et al., 2021; Sutrisno et al., 2023, as cited in Olomjobi et al., 2024). These features democratize access to entrepreneurial knowledge and resources and support business growth through online communities and engagement (Al Sharji et al., 2018; Talebi et al., 2012; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Parise & Guinan, 2008; Bernoff & Li, 2008, as cited in Ahmed et al., 2019).

As social media usage increases, so does the level of user engagement. Social media engagement is described as a multidimensional construct consisting of behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions (Dessart, 2017). Behavioral engagement refers to observable actions such as liking, sharing, and commenting on content (Ni et al., 2020). Affective engagement reflects emotional responses such as excitement or inspiration that motivate continued interaction (Dubovi & Tabak, 2021; Chan-Olmsted & Wolter, 2017). Cognitive engagement involves attention, understanding, and critical evaluation of content (Ni et al., 2020; Chan-Olmsted & Wolter, 2017). These dimensions collectively explain how individuals actively interact with social media platforms and derive meaningful experiences.

Existing studies suggest that social media engagement plays a significant role in shaping entrepreneurial intention. Social media facilitates opportunity recognition, enhances access to information, and strengthens social networks (Park et al., 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Vaghely & Julien, 2010, as cited in Abdelfattah et al., 2022). Individuals who actively engage with social media are more likely to develop entrepreneurial skills, gain exposure to business ideas, and build confidence in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures (Abdelfattah et al., 2022; Chaniago & Sayuti, 2022). Furthermore, social media engagement has been shown to influence entrepreneurial intention through learning, networking, and social interaction (Do et al., 2020; Huang & Zhang, 2020; Shi et al., 2022; Sutrisno et al., 2023, as cited in Olomjobi et al., 2024).

Despite its growing importance, limited studies have examined the relationship between social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention in smaller cities such as Cotabato City, where digital engagement is high but entrepreneurial ecosystems are still developing. Moreover, existing research has largely focused on students or business professionals, with limited attention to the broader population of social media users. There is also a lack of studies integrating Social Media Engagement Theory with the Theory of Planned Behavior in explaining how behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement influence the determinants of entrepreneurial intention (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016; Dessart, 2017; Ajzen, 1991).

In response to these gaps, this study aims to examine the influence of social media engagement—across behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions—on entrepreneurial intention and its determinants: attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control among residents of Cotabato City. This study conceptualizes social media engagement as a multidimensional construct that influences the key components of entrepreneurial intention, such that behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement shape individuals' attitudes, perceived social influences, and perceived behavioral control toward entrepreneurship. Specifically, it seeks to determine the level of social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention, as well as to analyze the relationship between respondents' demographic characteristics and these variables and examine the influence of social media engagement on entrepreneurial intention. It is hypothesized that the demographic profile of the respondents is significantly related to their level of social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, social media engagement is hypothesized to have a significant influence on entrepreneurial intention. Ultimately, the study aims to develop a context-specific framework linking social media engagement to entrepreneurial intention.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the research design, participants, study locale, research instrument, data collection procedure, and methods of data analysis used to examine the influence of social media engagement on entrepreneurial intention among residents of Cotabato City.

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the influence of social media engagement on entrepreneurial intention among residents of Cotabato City. This approach enabled the collection of numerical data to describe the characteristics of the variables and determine the relationships between them without manipulating any conditions. Quantitative research is appropriate for examining relationships among measurable variables through statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014), while descriptive research allows for the identification of patterns and levels of variables as they naturally occur. A correlational design was further utilized to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

The study involved at least 385 residents of Cotabato City aged 18 to 60 years who had resided in the city for at least two years and were active social media users. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula with a 95% confidence level, $\pm 5\%$ margin of error, and 50% variability. A purposive-convenience sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants were relevant to the objectives of the study. Individuals who did not meet the inclusion criteria, such as non-social media users or those residing in the city for less than two years, were excluded. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Data were collected using an adapted structured questionnaire consisting of three sections: demographic information, social media engagement, and entrepreneurial intention. Social media engagement was measured across behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions using a five-point Likert scale, while entrepreneurial intention was assessed based on attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The instrument was adapted from established studies (Dessart et al., 2016; Ni et al., 2020; Dinc & Budic, 2016). To ensure clarity and inclusivity, the questionnaire was translated into Tagalog and administered online through Google Forms.

Content validity was established through expert evaluation by three subject matter specialists, resulting in an overall mean score of 3.89, indicating that the instrument was valid. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.916 for social media engagement and 0.947 for entrepreneurial intention, both interpreted as excellent (Cronbach, 1951; Hair et al., 2019). A pilot test involving 30 respondents further confirmed the internal consistency of the instrument.

Data collection was conducted online through Google Forms, with the survey link distributed via email and social media platforms such as Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter). An informed consent form was included at the beginning of the questionnaire, outlining the purpose of the study, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Only participants who provided consent were allowed to proceed. All responses were securely stored, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time, with their data removed upon request.

Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed in data analysis. Frequency and percentage were used to summarize demographic characteristics, while mean and standard deviation were utilized to describe the levels of social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention (Lind et al., 2018; Field, 2018). To examine relationships between variables, eta correlation was applied for categorical variables, while point-biserial correlation was used for dichotomous variables (Richardson, 2011; LeBlanc & Cox, 2008).

Prior to regression analysis, diagnostic tests were conducted to assess the assumptions of linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, independence of errors, and absence of multicollinearity using scatterplots, histograms, normal probability plots, and collinearity diagnostics. Simple linear regression was then employed to determine whether social media engagement significantly predicts entrepreneurial intention. In this model, social media

engagement served as the independent variable, while entrepreneurial intention was the dependent variable (Field, 2018). To ensure robustness, a split-half analysis was conducted by dividing the sample into two subgroups and comparing regression results (Hair et al., 2019). All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS with a significance level set at 0.05.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents' privacy and confidentiality were protected in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. No harm was posed to participants, and all data were used solely for academic purposes. The researcher obtained approval from the Graduate School and ensured transparency, proper data handling, and adherence to ethical research standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the study and discusses the findings in relation to existing literature on social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention.

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 2, including age group, sex, occupation, number of social media accounts, frequently visited social media platforms, and daily hours spent on social media.

Table 2: Distribution of Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percent
Age Group		
Generation Z 18-25	190	49.4
Millennials/ Generation Y (29-44 years old)	153	39.7
Generation X (45-60 years old)	42	10.9
Total	385	100.0
Gender (Sex)		
Male	183	47.5
Female	202	52.5
Total	385	100.0
Occupation		
Employed	258	67.0
Self-employed	56	14.5
Technical/Skilled worker	30	7.8
Unemployed/Retired	41	10.6
Total	385	100.0
Number of Social Media Accounts		
1	12	3.1
2	55	14.3
3	158	41.0
4	88	22.9
5	40	10.4
Greater than 5	32	8.3

Total	385	100.0
Social Media websites frequently visited		Rank
Facebook	377	1
Messenger	343	2
Instagram	144	4
X (Twitter)	46	6
Tiktok	222	3
YouTube	140	5
Number of hours spent on social media daily		
Less than 3 hours	22	5.7
Between 3 hours and less than 6 hours	71	18.4
Between 6 hours and less than 9 hours	217	56.4
Between 9 hours and less than 12 hours	68	17.7
More than 12 hours	7	1.8
Total	385	100.0

The results indicate that the majority of respondents belong to Generation Z (18–25 years old), accounting for 49.4% of the sample, followed by Millennials or Generation Y (29–44 years old) at 39.7%, while Generation X (45–60 years old) represents the smallest proportion at 10.9%. This distribution suggests that younger individuals are more actively represented in the study, which is consistent with previous research indicating that younger generations are more engaged with digital technologies and social media platforms (Mallios et al., 2023; Olomojobi et al., 2024).

In terms of sex, female respondents slightly outnumbered male respondents, comprising 52.5% and 47.5%, respectively, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. Regarding occupation, the majority of respondents were employed (67.0%), followed by self-employed individuals (14.5%), unemployed or retired respondents (10.6%), and technical or skilled workers (7.8%). This suggests that most participants are engaged in professional or income-generating activities, which may influence their exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities.

With regard to social media usage, most respondents reported having three social media accounts (41.0%), followed by four accounts (22.9%) and two accounts (14.3%), while fewer respondents reported having five or more accounts. This indicates a high level of digital engagement among respondents, as maintaining multiple accounts reflects frequent interaction with various platforms.

In terms of platform preference, Facebook was identified as the most frequently visited platform, followed by Messenger and TikTok, while Instagram and YouTube showed moderate usage, and X (formerly Twitter) had the lowest usage. These findings reflect the widespread popularity of Facebook and Messenger as primary tools for communication and information sharing. In the Philippine context, social media usage is notably high, with Facebook consistently recognized as one of the most widely used platforms among internet users, highlighting its dominance in digital interaction (Philippine Star, 2025).

Furthermore, the majority of respondents reported spending between six to less than nine hours on social media daily (56.4%), followed by three to less than six hours (18.4%) and nine to less than twelve hours (17.7%). Only a small proportion reported spending less than three hours or more than twelve hours per day. This pattern

indicates that social media is deeply integrated into the daily routines of respondents, exposing them to continuous streams of information, interactions, and content.

The observed patterns of social media usage have important implications for entrepreneurial intention. Previous studies have shown that social media platforms facilitate communication, networking, and knowledge sharing among users (Kumar & Nanda, 2019). In the context of entrepreneurship, social media engagement enables individuals to access information, exchange ideas, and interact with communities that support learning and opportunity discovery (Abdelfattah et al., 2022; Chaniago & Sayuti, 2022). Moreover, frequent exposure to social media content, including business ideas and success stories, may shape individuals’ attitudes and perceptions toward entrepreneurship.

Consistent with this, prior research suggests that increased social media usage is associated with more positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship and stronger entrepreneurial intentions (Barrera-Verdugo & Villarroel-Villarroel, 2022; Afranie et al., 2024). As individuals spend more time engaging with digital platforms, they are more likely to encounter entrepreneurial content that may influence their awareness, motivation, and intention to pursue entrepreneurial activities. These findings highlight the role of social media as a significant contextual factor in shaping entrepreneurial intention among respondents.

The level of social media engagement among respondents is presented in Table 3, categorized into behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions.

Table 3: Level of social media engagement, in terms of a.) behavioral, b.) affective, and c.) cognitive engagement, among the residents of Cotabato City

Social Media Engagement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Behavioral Engagement	4.39		Very High
1. Using social media is my daily routine	4.55	.769	Very High
2. I browse social media whenever I have free time	4.55	.706	Very High
3. Even if it’s late, I’ll still check social media before going to sleep	4.24	.883	Very High
4. I often use social media out of habit to relax	4.32	.791	Very High
5. I use social media to search for ideas and information	4.26	.845	Very High
Affective Engagement	3.88		High
1. I feel enthusiastic about social media	4.08	.861	High
2. I feel bored when I can’t use social media	3.91	.895	High
3. Compared to the real world, I feel happier when socializing on social media	3.77	1.060	High
4. I feel anxious when I can’t use social media	3.68	1.028	High
5. I get pleasure from interacting with social media	3.98	.898	High
Cognitive Engagement	3.75		High
1. I spend a lot of time thinking about social media	3.73	1.029	High

2.	When interacting with social media, I forget everything else around me	3.64	1.091	High
3.	Time flies when I'm interacting with social media	4.09	.945	High
4.	When I am interacting with social media, I get carried away	3.78	.976	High
5.	When I'm using social media, it's difficult to detach myself	3.50	1.011	High
Grand Mean		4.01		High

Note: Mean interpretation — 4.21–5.00 = very high (very highly engaged); 3.41–4.20 = high (highly engaged); 2.61–3.40 = moderate (moderately engaged); 1.81–2.60 = low (slightly engaged); 1.00–1.80 = very low (not engaged).

The results indicate that respondents exhibit a generally high level of social media engagement, with an overall mean of 4.01, interpreted as high engagement. Among the three dimensions, behavioral engagement recorded the highest level, with a mean of 4.39, indicating very high engagement. This suggests that social media use is deeply embedded in the daily routines of respondents, as reflected in high agreement with statements related to habitual use, such as browsing during free time and checking social media before sleep.

Affective engagement was found to be high, with a mean of 3.88, indicating that respondents experience positive emotional responses when interacting with social media. Feelings of enthusiasm, enjoyment, and attachment to social media platforms were commonly reported, suggesting that emotional factors contribute to continued usage and interaction.

Similarly, cognitive engagement also demonstrated a high level, with a mean of 3.75. This indicates that respondents invest attention and mental effort when interacting with social media, as reflected in their tendency to become absorbed in content and lose track of time while using these platforms. These findings highlight the role of social media as a medium that not only captures users' attention but also sustains their cognitive involvement.

Overall, the findings suggest that social media engagement among residents of Cotabato City is multidimensional, involving behavioral actions, emotional responses, and cognitive processes. Among these dimensions, behavioral engagement appears to be the most dominant, indicating that frequent and habitual use characterizes users' interaction with social media platforms.

These findings support the view that social media has become an integral part of daily life, where individuals actively interact with content rather than passively consume it (Mallios et al., 2023). Furthermore, the presence of strong affective engagement aligns with previous studies highlighting the role of emotions in driving user interaction and participation in digital environments (Dubovi & Tabak, 2021). The observed cognitive engagement is also consistent with research suggesting that users allocate attention and mental effort when engaging with online content (Ni et al., 2020; Chan-Olmsted & Wolter, 2017).

Consistent with the multidimensional perspective of social media engagement, these results affirm that engagement encompasses behavioral, affective, and cognitive elements that collectively shape user interaction in digital environments (Dessart, 2017). The high levels observed across all dimensions suggest that respondents are not only frequent users of social media but are also emotionally and cognitively involved, which may have important implications for influencing their perceptions and intentions, particularly in the context of entrepreneurship.

The level of entrepreneurial intention among respondents is presented in Table 4, categorized into attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Table 4: Level of entrepreneurial intention, in terms of a.) attitude toward entrepreneurship, b.) subjective norms, and c.) perceived behavioral control, among the residents of Cotabato City.

Entrepreneurial Intention	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Attitude Toward Entrepreneurship	4.21		Very High
1. Being an entrepreneur would entail great satisfactions for me	4.26	.823	Very High
2. Being an entrepreneur implies to me more advantages	4.29	.785	Very High
3. A career of entrepreneur is very attractive to me	4.19	.885	High
4. If I had the opportunity and resources, I'd like to start a company	4.29	.746	Very High
5. Among various options, I would rather be an entrepreneur	4.04	.841	High
Subjective Norms	3.93		High
1. If I decided to create a company, my close family would approve of that decision	4.07	.786	High
2. If I decided to create a company, my friends would approve of that decision	3.99	.812	High
3. If I decided to create a company, my colleagues would approve of that decision	3.92	.828	High
4. My family members will encourage me to start my business	3.90	.848	High
5. People that are important to me think that I should pursue a career as an entrepreneur	3.75	.851	High
Perceived Behavioral Control	3.22		Moderate
1. I know the necessary practical details to start a firm	3.36	.945	Moderate
2. I can control the creation process of a new firm	3.25	.899	Moderate
3. To start a firm and keep it working would be easy for me	3.13	.869	Moderate
4. I am prepared to start a viable firm	3.15	.927	Moderate
5. If I tried to start a firm, I would have a high probability of succeeding	3.22	.894	Moderate
Grand Mean	3.79		High

Note: Mean interpretation — 4.21–5.00 = very high (very strong entrepreneurial intention); 3.41–4.20 = high (strong entrepreneurial intention); 2.61–3.40 = moderate (moderate entrepreneurial intention); 1.81–2.60 = low (weak entrepreneurial intention); 1.00–1.80 = very low (very weak entrepreneurial intention).

The relationship between Age Group, Occupation, Number of Social Media Accounts, Number of Hours Spent on social media daily and social media engagement is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Measures of Association Between Age Group, Occupation, Number of Social Media Accounts, Number of Hours Spent on social media daily and Social Media Engagement (SME)

Variable	η (Eta)	η^2 (Eta Squared)	p-value	Interpretation
Age Group	.164	.027	.005	Very Weak Association (Significant)
Occupation	.114	.013	.175	Very Weak Association (Not Significant)
Number of Social Media Accounts	.331	.110	.000	Weak Association (Significant)
Number of Hours Spent on social media daily	.491	.241	.000	Moderate Association (Significant)

Note: Eta (η) interpretation: 0.80–1.00 = very strong; 0.60–0.79 = strong; 0.40–0.59 = moderate; 0.20–0.39 = weak; 0.00–0.19 = very weak. $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance, while $p > 0.05$ indicates no significant relationship.

The results indicate that age group shows a very weak but statistically significant association with social media engagement ($\eta = .164$, $p = .005$), suggesting that differences in age are related to engagement levels, although the effect is minimal. In contrast, occupation demonstrates a very weak and non-significant association ($\eta = .114$, $p = .175$), indicating that occupational differences do not meaningfully influence respondents’ level of engagement.

Meanwhile, the number of social media accounts exhibits a weak but statistically significant association with social media engagement ($\eta = .331$, $p < .001$), suggesting that individuals who maintain multiple accounts tend to have higher levels of engagement. More notably, the number of hours spent on social media daily shows a moderate and statistically significant association ($\eta = .491$, $p < .001$), representing the strongest relationship among the variables examined. The corresponding effect size ($\eta^2 = .241$) indicates that approximately 24.1% of the variation in social media engagement can be explained by the amount of time respondents spend on social media.

These findings suggest that while demographic characteristics such as age and occupation have limited influence on social media engagement, behavioral factors—particularly time spent on social media—play a more substantial role. The weak association of age group implies that social media engagement is relatively widespread across different age categories, reflecting the accessibility and integration of digital platforms in everyday life. Similarly, the non-significant relationship with occupation indicates that engagement levels are not strongly determined by professional background.

The positive association between the number of social media accounts and engagement highlights how managing multiple platforms may increase opportunities for interaction, information access, and participation in online communities. Previous studies have emphasized that social media platforms facilitate knowledge sharing, networking, and collaboration across diverse digital environments (Chaniago & Sayuti, 2022; Olomjobi et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the stronger association between time spent on social media and engagement supports the idea that increased exposure to digital content enhances user interaction and participation. Individuals who spend more

time online are more likely to encounter diverse content, engage in discussions, and actively participate in digital communities. This finding is consistent with prior research suggesting that frequent interaction with social media environments promotes engagement, information exchange, and opportunity recognition (Park et al., 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Vaghely & Julien, 2010, as cited in Abdelfattah et al., 2022).

Overall, the results highlight that social media engagement is influenced more by users’ behavioral patterns than by their demographic characteristics. Among the variables examined, time spent on social media emerges as the most influential factor in shaping engagement levels, emphasizing the importance of usage intensity in understanding digital behavior.

The relationship between sex, frequently visited social media platforms, and social media engagement is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Measures of Association Between Sex, Social Media websites frequently visited, and Social Media Engagement (SME)

Variable	rpb	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	.031	.545	Very Weak Positive (Not Significant)
Social Media websites frequently visited			
Facebook	-.019	.703	Very Weak Negative (Not Significant)
Messenger	-.026	.608	Very Weak Negative (Not Significant)
Instagram	.029	.577	Very Weak Positive (Not Significant)
X (Twitter)	.066	.196	Very Weak Positive (Not Significant)
TikTok	.084	.101	Very Weak Positive (Not Significant)
YouTube	-.107	.036	Very Weak Negative (Significant)

Note: rpb interpretation: ± 0.80 – ± 1.00 = very strong; ± 0.60 – ± 0.79 = strong; ± 0.40 – ± 0.59 = moderate; ± 0.20 – ± 0.39 = weak; ± 0.00 – ± 0.19 = very weak. $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance, while $p > 0.05$ indicates no significant relationship.

The results indicate that sex has a very weak and non-significant relationship with social media engagement (rpb = .031, p = .545), suggesting that engagement levels do not significantly differ between male and female respondents. This implies that social media engagement is not strongly influenced by gender but may instead depend on individual usage patterns and preferences.

Similarly, most of the frequently visited social media platforms—including Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok—show very weak and non-significant relationships with social media engagement. These findings suggest that engagement is not determined by the specific platform users visit, but rather by how individuals interact with content and participate within digital environments.

In contrast, YouTube demonstrates a statistically significant but very weak negative relationship with social media engagement ($r_{pb} = -.107, p = .036$). Although significant, the small magnitude of the coefficient indicates limited practical significance, suggesting that the frequency of visiting YouTube contributes minimally to variations in engagement levels. This may reflect the platform’s primary function as a source of informational and entertainment content, where users tend to consume media rather than actively engage in interactive behaviors.

These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that social media usage is widespread across demographic groups, with engagement patterns shaped more by individual behavior than by gender differences (Mallios et al., 2023; Abdelfattah et al., 2022). Furthermore, the lack of significant relationships across most platforms supports the view that engagement is a multidimensional construct influenced by users’ motivations, emotional involvement, and cognitive participation rather than platform choice alone (Dessart, 2017; Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

Overall, the results suggest that social media engagement among respondents is not strongly associated with sex or platform preference. Instead, engagement appears to be driven more by how individuals use social media—such as their level of interaction, interest, and participation—rather than by demographic characteristics or the specific platforms they frequently visit.

The relationship between Age Group, Occupation, Number of Social Media Accounts, Number of Hours Spent on social media daily and entrepreneurial intention is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Measures of Association Between Age Group, Occupation, Number of Social Media Accounts, Number of Hours Spent on social media daily and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI).

Variable	η (Eta)	η^2 (Eta Squared)	p-value	Interpretation
Age Group	.174	.030	.003	Very Weak Association (Significant)
Occupation	.370	.137	.000	Weak Association (Significant)
Number of Social Media Accounts	.139	.019	.189	Very Weak Association (Not Significant)
Number of Hours Spent on social media daily	.157	.025	.050	Very Weak Association (Marginally Significant)

Note: Eta (η) interpretation: 0.80–1.00 = very strong; 0.60–0.79 = strong; 0.40–0.59 = moderate; 0.20–0.39 = weak; 0.00–0.19 = very weak. $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance, while $p > 0.05$ indicates no significant relationship.

The results indicate that age group has a very weak but statistically significant association with entrepreneurial intention ($\eta = .174, p = .003$), suggesting that while differences in age are related to entrepreneurial intention, the strength of this relationship is minimal. In contrast, the number of social media accounts shows a very weak and non-significant association ($\eta = .139, p = .189$), indicating that the number of accounts owned does not meaningfully relate to respondents’ entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, the number of hours spent on social

media daily demonstrates a very weak and marginally significant association ($\eta = .157, p = .050$), suggesting that time spent on social media has only a limited relationship with entrepreneurial intention.

On the other hand, occupation exhibits a weak but statistically significant association with entrepreneurial intention ($\eta = .370, p < .001$), representing the strongest relationship among the variables examined. This finding suggests that respondents' occupational background has a more noticeable influence on their entrepreneurial intention compared to other demographic factors.

These findings imply that entrepreneurial intention is not strongly determined by demographic characteristics such as age or by the extent of social media usage. Individuals across different age groups may share similar perceptions of entrepreneurship, indicating that entrepreneurial interest is not confined to a specific generation. Moreover, the weak associations observed for social media-related variables suggest that mere exposure to or usage of social media does not necessarily translate into stronger entrepreneurial intention.

This is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which emphasizes that entrepreneurial intention is primarily influenced by psychological factors such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control rather than demographic variables alone (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009, as cited in Aditya, 2020). While social media may provide access to information and opportunities, its influence on intention may depend more on how individuals interpret and utilize such experiences.

The significant relationship between occupation and entrepreneurial intention highlights the role of practical exposure and professional experience in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations. Individuals who are engaged in work environments may develop greater awareness of business operations, gain relevant skills, and build networks that enhance their confidence in pursuing entrepreneurial activities. Previous studies have also emphasized that work experience and professional exposure contribute to individuals' perceptions of entrepreneurial feasibility and desirability, which are key determinants of entrepreneurial intention (Maydiantoro et al., 2021; Olomjobi et al., 2024).

Overall, the findings suggest that entrepreneurial intention among respondents is influenced more by experiential and psychological factors than by basic demographic characteristics or general social media usage patterns. Among the variables examined, occupation emerges as the most relevant factor, although its effect remains modest.

The relationship between sex, frequently visited social media platforms, and entrepreneurial intention is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Measures of Association Between Sex, Social Media websites frequently visited, and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)

Variable	rpb	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	-.098	.054	Very Weak Negative (Not Significant)
Social Media websites frequently visited			
Facebook	.098	.054	Very Weak Positive (Not Significant)
Messenger	.108	.034	Very Weak Positive (Significant)
Instagram	-.041	.421	Very Weak Negative

			(Not Significant)
X (Twitter)	.085	.096	Very Weak Positive (Not Significant)
Tiktok	-.106	.038	Very Weak Negative (Significant)
YouTube	-.012	.817	Very Weak Negative (Not Significant)

Note: rpb interpretation: ± 0.80 – ± 1.00 = very strong; ± 0.60 – ± 0.79 = strong; ± 0.40 – ± 0.59 = moderate; ± 0.20 – ± 0.39 = weak; ± 0.00 – ± 0.19 = very weak. $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance, while $p > 0.05$ indicates no significant relationship.

The results indicate that sex has a very weak and non-significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention (rpb = -0.098 , $p = .054$), suggesting that entrepreneurial intention does not significantly differ between male and female respondents. This implies that entrepreneurial aspirations are relatively consistent across genders.

Similarly, most of the frequently visited social media platforms—including Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube—show very weak and non-significant relationships with entrepreneurial intention. These findings suggest that simply visiting specific platforms is not strongly associated with individuals’ intention to engage in entrepreneurial activities, as users may primarily utilize these platforms for communication, entertainment, or information consumption.

However, two platforms demonstrate statistically significant relationships, although the strength remains very weak. Messenger shows a very weak positive association with entrepreneurial intention (rpb = $.108$, $p = .034$), which may reflect its role as a communication tool that facilitates interaction, networking, and information exchange among users. In contrast, TikTok exhibits a very weak negative relationship (rpb = -0.106 , $p = .038$), suggesting that while the platform is widely used, it may be less associated with entrepreneurial intention, possibly due to its emphasis on entertainment and short-form content consumption.

These findings indicate that the relationship between social media use and entrepreneurial intention is not determined by platform preference alone but depends more on how individuals engage with and utilize these platforms. Prior research supports this view, emphasizing that social media contributes to entrepreneurial development through networking, knowledge sharing, and interaction rather than mere usage (Abdelfattah et al., 2022; Chaniago & Sayuti, 2022; Olomjobi et al., 2024).

Overall, the results suggest that entrepreneurial intention among respondents is not strongly influenced by gender or by the specific platforms they frequently visit. Instead, the way individuals interact within social media environments appears to play a more important role than platform choice itself.

The collinearity diagnostics for the regression model examining the influence of social media engagement on entrepreneurial intention are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Collinearity Diagnostics for the Regression Model Examining the Influence of Social Media Engagement on Entrepreneurial Intention

Predictor	Tolerance	VIF	Condition Index	Interpretation
Social Media Engagement	1.000	1.000	11.500	No Multicollinearity

Note: Tolerance ≥ 0.10 and VIF ≤ 10 indicate no multicollinearity, while tolerance ≤ 0.10 and VIF ≥ 10 indicate the presence of multicollinearity.

The results indicate that the tolerance value is 1.000 and the variance inflation factor (VIF) is 1.000, both of which fall within acceptable thresholds, indicating the absence of multicollinearity. Additionally, the condition index (11.500) is below the critical value of 30, further confirming that the model does not suffer from collinearity issues.

These findings suggest that the regression model satisfies the assumption of multicollinearity and is statistically appropriate for further analysis. Given that the model includes only one predictor variable, the absence of multicollinearity is expected. Therefore, the regression results can be interpreted with confidence.

The results of the regression analysis examining the influence of social media engagement on entrepreneurial intention are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Simple Regression Analysis on the Influence of Social Media Engagement on Entrepreneurial Intention

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	p-value	Interpretation
Constant	3.270	.179	-	18.231	.000	-
Social Media Engagement	.129	.044	.148	2.933	.004	Statistically Significant

Note: $R = .148$, $R^2 = .022$, Adjusted $R^2 = .019$, Durbin-Watson = 1.592. ANOVA results: $F(1, 383) = 8.601$, $p = .004$

$p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance. Dependent variable: Entrepreneurial Intention (EI_Total).

Prior to the regression analysis, diagnostic tests confirmed that all assumptions were satisfied, including linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, independence of errors, and absence of multicollinearity. The Durbin–Watson value of 1.592 indicates no autocorrelation, while previous diagnostics confirmed the absence of multicollinearity, supporting the suitability of the model for analysis.

The regression results indicate a statistically significant but weak positive relationship between social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention ($R = .148$, $p = .004$). The model explains 2.2% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention ($R^2 = .022$), indicating limited explanatory power. The ANOVA results further confirm that the model is statistically significant ($F(1, 383) = 8.601$, $p = .004$).

The regression coefficient shows that social media engagement has a positive and statistically significant influence on entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = .148$, $B = .129$, $p = .004$). This indicates that an increase in social media engagement is associated with a corresponding increase in entrepreneurial intention, although the magnitude of this effect remains small.

These findings suggest that while social media engagement contributes to entrepreneurial intention, its overall influence is limited. This supports the Theory of Planned Behavior, which emphasizes that entrepreneurial intention is primarily shaped by psychological factors such as attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control rather than external exposure alone (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009 as cited in Aditya, 2020).

The weak effect size indicates that social media engagement may function more as a facilitating or supporting factor rather than a primary determinant of entrepreneurial intention. While social media provides access to information, networks, and entrepreneurial role models, its influence may depend on how these experiences translate into individuals’ beliefs, motivations, and perceived capabilities.

This interpretation is consistent with prior studies suggesting that social media supports entrepreneurial learning, opportunity recognition, and networking (Abdelfattah et al., 2022; Olomjobi et al., 2024; Chin & Chee, 2024). However, exposure alone may not be sufficient to strongly influence entrepreneurial intention without the presence of underlying psychological readiness and contextual support.

From the perspective of Social Media Engagement Theory, engagement reflects behavioral, affective, and cognitive involvement in digital platforms (Dessart, 2017; Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016). While such engagement promotes interaction and information exchange, the findings indicate that these interactions do not necessarily translate into strong entrepreneurial intentions. This may be due to the diverse purposes of social media use, which often include entertainment and communication rather than entrepreneurial development.

Overall, the results highlight that social media engagement plays a significant but limited role in shaping entrepreneurial intention among respondents. The findings underscore the importance of strengthening key psychological and contextual factors—such as entrepreneurial attitudes, social support, and perceived capability—to enhance the translation of digital engagement into entrepreneurial outcomes.

The stability of the regression model was further assessed using a split-half validation approach, with the results presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Split-Half Validation of the Regression Model on Social Media Engagement and Entrepreneurial Intention

Group	R	R ²	F	p-value	Interpretation
Even	.064	.004	0.780	.378	Not Significant
Odd	.211	.045	8.906	.003	Significant

Note: $p < 0.05$ indicates statistical significance, while $p > 0.05$ indicates no statistical significance. Dependent variable: Entrepreneurial Intention. Predictor: Social Media Engagement.

The results reveal variation in the relationship between social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention across the two subgroups. For the even-numbered respondents, the regression model was not statistically significant ($F = 0.780$, $p = .378$), with a very weak relationship ($R = .064$, $R^2 = .004$), indicating that social media engagement does not significantly predict entrepreneurial intention within this subgroup.

In contrast, the regression model for the odd-numbered respondents was statistically significant ($F = 8.906$, $p = .003$), although the strength of the relationship remains weak ($R = .211$, $R^2 = .045$). This indicates that social media engagement explains only a small proportion of the variance in entrepreneurial intention, even within the subgroup where significance was observed.

The variation in results between the two groups suggests limited consistency in the predictive relationship, indicating that the regression model may lack stability across different subsets of the sample. Despite this, the overall pattern remains consistent with the main regression findings, showing that the effect of social media engagement on entrepreneurial intention is weak.

These findings reinforce the conclusion that social media engagement plays a limited role in explaining entrepreneurial intention. The low explanatory power observed across both subgroups suggests that other factors contribute more substantially to entrepreneurial intention.

This interpretation aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which emphasizes that entrepreneurial intention is primarily influenced by internal psychological factors such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991; Liñán & Chen, 2009 as cited in Aditya, 2020). While social media may enhance

awareness and exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities, it does not consistently translate into strong entrepreneurial intention.

Overall, the split-half validation results highlight that the influence of social media engagement on entrepreneurial intention is not only weak but also somewhat inconsistent across subgroups, underscoring the importance of considering additional psychological and contextual factors in explaining entrepreneurial behavior.

Based on the findings of this study, a conceptual framework linking social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention is proposed, integrating insights from Social Media Engagement Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior. The proposed framework is illustrated in Figure 3.

The regression results indicate that social media engagement has a statistically significant but weak positive influence on entrepreneurial intention, suggesting that while engagement contributes to variations in entrepreneurial intention, its direct effect is limited. This finding positions social media engagement as a facilitating factor rather than a primary determinant.

Drawing from Social Media Engagement Theory, social media engagement is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions. These dimensions reflect how individuals interact with digital platforms, process information, and develop emotional connections with content. Through these interactions, individuals are exposed to entrepreneurial ideas, networks, and opportunities that may influence their perceptions and motivations.

Anchored in the Theory of Planned Behavior, entrepreneurial intention is primarily shaped by three key psychological components: attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The findings of this study support the view that these psychological factors play a more central role in shaping entrepreneurial intention compared to external influences such as social media engagement.

Accordingly, the proposed framework positions social media engagement as a contextual and enabling factor that indirectly contributes to entrepreneurial intention by influencing individuals' exposure, awareness, and learning. However, the translation of this engagement into entrepreneurial intention depends largely on the development of favorable attitudes, supportive social norms, and strong perceived behavioral control.

Overall, the framework suggests that while social media engagement enhances access to information, interaction, and inspiration, entrepreneurial intention is ultimately driven by internal psychological processes. This integrated perspective highlights the complementary roles of digital engagement and psychological readiness in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes.

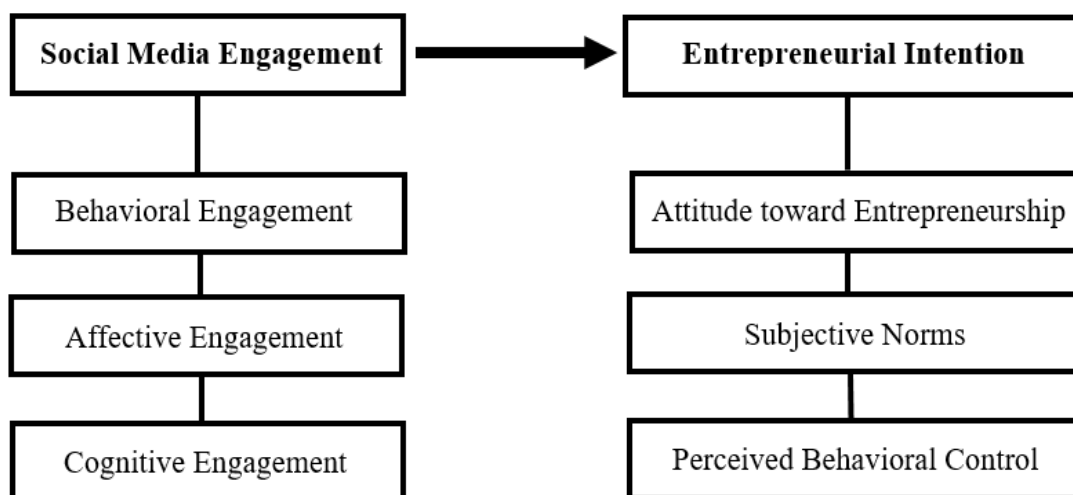


Figure 3: Proposed Social Media–Supported Entrepreneurial Intention Framework

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between social media engagement and entrepreneurial intention among residents of Cotabato City. The findings indicate that while respondents demonstrate high levels of social media engagement and generally positive entrepreneurial intentions, the relationship between these variables is statistically significant but weak. This suggests that frequent interaction with social media platforms does not necessarily translate into a strong intention to pursue entrepreneurial activities.

The results further show that entrepreneurial intention is more strongly influenced by psychological factors, particularly attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, as emphasized in the Theory of Planned Behavior. In particular, the moderate level of perceived behavioral control suggests that individuals may lack the confidence, skills, or resources necessary to engage in entrepreneurship despite having positive attitudes and perceived social support.

Overall, the study concludes that social media engagement functions as a supporting and enabling factor that enhances exposure to entrepreneurial ideas and opportunities but is not sufficient on its own to drive entrepreneurial intention. The development of entrepreneurial intention depends more strongly on individuals' internal motivations, social influences, and perceived capabilities. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening entrepreneurial skills, self-efficacy, and access to resources to effectively promote entrepreneurial behavior.

IMPLICATION

The findings indicate that while social media engagement is prevalent among respondents, its influence on entrepreneurial intention is statistically significant but limited. This suggests that interaction with social media platforms alone is insufficient to strongly motivate individuals to pursue entrepreneurial activities. Instead, entrepreneurial intention is more strongly shaped by psychological factors such as attitude toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, as emphasized in the Theory of Planned Behavior.

These results imply that social media engagement functions as a supporting and enabling factor by providing exposure to information, networks, and opportunities, but it does not serve as a primary driver of entrepreneurial intention. The moderate level of perceived behavioral control further indicates that individuals may lack confidence in their ability to start and manage a business, highlighting the need for interventions that strengthen entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and access to resources.

From a practical perspective, educational institutions, local government units, and entrepreneurship support organizations may utilize social media as a complementary tool for promoting entrepreneurial initiatives. In particular, these stakeholders may implement structured entrepreneurship programs, such as online entrepreneurship training, digital marketing workshops, and social media-based mentorship initiatives, to enhance both engagement and skill development. However, these efforts should be integrated with capacity-building programs that strengthen individuals' competencies, self-efficacy, and perceived behavioral control.

Overall, the findings underscore that while social media engagement can enhance awareness and access to entrepreneurial opportunities, the development of entrepreneurial intention depends more strongly on internal psychological readiness than on social media engagement alone.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research may further examine additional factors influencing entrepreneurial intention beyond social media engagement, such as entrepreneurial education, financial literacy, digital skills, and access to resources. Studies may also focus on specific populations, including students, aspiring entrepreneurs, or individuals with business experience, to provide more targeted insights. Additionally, the use of probability sampling techniques and the inclusion of respondents from different geographic locations may enhance the generalizability of findings. Future research may also explore moderating or mediating variables within the framework of the

Theory of Planned Behavior to better understand the mechanisms through which social media engagement relates to entrepreneurial intention.

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