The Mediating Role of Technological Self-Efficacy: Social Media's Impact on Vocational Students' Entrepreneurial Outcomes in China

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how social media usage influences entrepreneurial outcomes among vocational students in China, with a focus on the mediating role of technological self-efficacy. Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), we propose a multidimensional framework integrating social media usage patterns, marketing strategies, and social capital as antecedents, while incorporating emotional behaviour and resource opportunities as parallel mediators. Data from 248 vocational student entrepreneurs actively utilizing social media for business operations were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via AMOS software. Results reveal that social media usage, marketing strategies, and social capital significantly enhance entrepreneurial success both directly and indirectly. Crucially, technological self-efficacy acts as a robust mediator, explaining how social media interactions translate into improved entrepreneurial outcomes. Additionally, entrepreneurship self-efficacy moderates key pathways, amplifying the impact of resource opportunities and emotional behaviour on success. This research bridges theoretical gaps by empirically validating SCT in the context of China's vocational education sector and offers practical insights for leveraging social media in nurturing digital entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Social media; Vocational Student Entrepreneurship; Technological Self-Efficacy; Entrepreneurial Outcomes; Social Capital; Structural Equation modelling

INTRODUCTION

Social media impact extends far beyond mere alterations in communication patterns. This is particularly true for young entrepreneurs. Recent research highlights a significant shift from traditional shopping to online platforms, with social media playing a crucial role in commerce. Sahut, Iandoli, and Teulon (2019) explore how social media entrepreneurship differs from traditional methods, especially in utilizing networks for marketing and understanding online consumer behaviour (Ha & Kim, 2023). Hence, the rise of mobile technology for shopping presents new opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

Among the young entrepreneurs in China, vocational students like use social media in digital entrepreneurship. Because these students poised as the next wave of digital entrepreneurs who sells things online, and are actively leveraging social media platforms to advance their commercial endeavours. According to Giuggioli and Pellegrini (2022) social media is vital for innovation in young Chinese e-commerce entrepreneurs. Elenurm (2022) highlight its importance in the success of China's online businesses, particularly for vocationally trained entrepreneurs. Obermayer, Kővári, Leinonen, Bak, and Valeri (2022) emphasize its role in learning and networking for these entrepreneurs.

This shift is particularly relevant for vocational students, who are interested in digital entrepreneurship, potentially reducing unemployment and addressing workplace inequality. Olanrewaju, Hossain, Whiteside, and Mercieca (2020) reveal young entrepreneurs are leveraging social media to attract consumers (social), highlighting its growing importance in digital marketing. Studies like Nam and Xiong (2021) emphasize social media on behavior and trust (emotional) in online reviews

While existing literature extensively explores social media on established enterprises and markets, there

remains a notable deficiency in studies focusing on how it shapes the entrepreneurial journey among vocational students (Tang, Omar, Bolong, & Mohd Zawawi, 2021). There exists social science literature regarding how social media impacts vocational students interested in entrepreneurship in terms of emotional regulation, social network construction, interpersonal skills enhancement, and mental health maintenance Wibowo et al. (2023). These students often lack traditional business education background but possess high adaptability to technology and a spirit of innovation (Sahut et al., 2019) . In addition to addressing the prevalent issue of unemployment among vocational students, which presents a vital avenue for these students to explore and learn innovative technological applications across diverse regions (Broekhuizen et al., 2023)

This study investigates how vocational school students utilize the social media for their entrepreneurial endeavours and how it affects their emotional and social behaviour by applying the theory of social cognitive theory (SCT)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Success among Young People

In the vocational education context, the correlation between adept utilization of social media and entrepreneurs' achievements by emerging entrepreneurs is increasingly evident (Sari, Marsakawati, & Herliyani, 2023). This success paradigm is primarily divided into two key elements: firstly, the strategic implementation of social media marketing to cultivate emotional resonance with consumers and simultaneously impact the entrepreneurs' own emotional well-being; secondly, the strategic accumulation and acquisition resources. Research by Yan (2020) illustrates how tailored social media campaigns elicit specific emotional responses from consumers, thereby enhancing engagement and fostering brand loyalty among young entrepreneurs. Concurrently, these marketing strategies significantly influence the entrepreneurs' emotional landscape, boosting their confidence and inner drive. The dual impact of social media in both emotional and social realms redefines the criteria for entrepreneurial success in the digital age (Belyaeva, 2018). Thus, digital entrepreneurs skilfully use social media for emotional engagement, social network expansion, and resource mobilization is directly linked to their business success, highlighting the importance of a deep understanding and proficient application of digital tools in the entrepreneurial process.

Social Media Use

Social media become crucial in companies' marketing efforts (Han & Zhang, 2022). Rupavijetra, Nilsook, Jitsupa, and Hanwong (2022) research underscores the importance of the frequency and type of content posted on social media in building a brand and increasing market visibility. For instance, a handicraft shop can effectively boost its brand recognition by showcasing its products and their stories on Instagram, echoing analysis of the importance of timely customer interaction in establishing robust customer relationships and achieving entrepreneurial success (Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). This shows various patterns of usage of social media among young entrepreneurs for their business strategies, which may have a significant positive impact on their entrepreneurial success (Samara & Terzian, 2021).

Young entrepreneurs in the field of vocational education demonstrate strategic thinking in their diversified use of social media, a key factor in their business success (Antoniazzi & Smuts, 2020). Zhang et al. (2021) study reveals that approximately 68% of student entrepreneurs frequently use WeChat for customer interactions, dedicating an average of 2.5 hours daily, which is crucial for establishing long-term customer relationships. report indicates that about 75% of entrepreneurs use TikTok for brand storytelling, spending around 2 hours daily to engage the 18 to 24-year-old consumer demographic, with its visual and creative content being a key factor in attracting this audience (Chen, Li, Lei, & Wang, 2021). Additionally, survey finds that around 65% of entrepreneurs spend about 3 hours weekly on LinkedIn for professional networking and B2B interactions, playing a significant role in fostering business collaborations and industry communication (Obschonka, Zhou, Zhou, Zhang, & Silbereisen, 2018). The use of WeChat, TikTok, and LinkedIn caters to specific business needs — customer relationships, brand visibility, and professional networking, respectively (Xue, 2023).

Social Media Marketing and effect on Emotional behaviour

Emotion significantly influences marketing strategies and overall business operations on social networking sites, playing a critical role in monitoring brand reputation and tracking customer feedback (Islam, Islam, Mannan, Rahman, & Islam, 2020). Qiu, García-Aracil, and Isusi-Fagoaga (2023) demonstrate that positive engagement with social media through instant feedback and recognition boosts entrepreneurial motivation and fosters positive emotional experiences among vocational students. However, cautions about the risks of emotional burnout due to continuous exposure to social media, which can negatively impact both motivation and emotional well-being. Additionally, Ghosh, Hughes, Hughes, and Hodgkinson (2021) find that innovative social media strategies not only enhance creativity but also amplify positive emotional engagement in the digital marketplace. These findings suggest a complex interplay between emotion and social media marketing, highlighting the importance of effectively managing emotional impacts (Suriyankietkaew & Nimsai, 2021).Therefore, it can be hypothesized that vocational student entrepreneurs who adeptly balance these emotional aspects are more likely to experience increased success in their digital entrepreneurship endeavors, owing to a strategic and emotionally intelligent approach to social media usage.

Social Capital and Resources Opportunities

Dakduk, ter Horst, Santalla, Molina, and Malavé (2017) reveals that active engagement of vocational students on LinkedIn notably improves their social capital, offering access to industry insights. Further studies by highlight that platforms like Instagram and Facebook are instrumental in showcasing student projects to potential investors, thereby uncovering funding and collaboration opportunities. These findings a strategic asset for gaining essential social capital and resources (Sondakh & Rajah, 2016). Hence, it is hypothesized that vocational students who skillfully use social media for networking, market analysis, and project promotion are likely to have a significant advantage in achieving entrepreneurial success due to enhanced access to valuable social capital and resources.

FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Social cognitive theory (SCT)

In 1925, Bandura is certain self-efficacy governs and exerts a substantial influence on human intention. A correlation has been observed between self-efficacy in digital entrepreneurship and the inclination to participate in digital entrepreneurship. An elevated degree of self-efficacy in digital entrepreneurship could potentially bolster an individual's inclination to participate in entrepreneurial activities, thereby promoting the manifestation of entrepreneurial conduct. Marketing and social media usage are three independent variables that impact self-efficacy.

The conceptual framework proposed by social cognitive theory (SCT) can bring out the social media impact on the entrepreneurial outcomes of vocational students (Erdisna, Ganefri, Ridwan, & Efendi, 2020). This analysis should specifically examine the contributions of emotional Behaviour and opportunities for resource acquisition (Darmawan, Ekopriyono, & Darmanto, 2022). Vocational education indicates that cognitive and social interactive processes are crucial for cultivating emotional behaviors and recognizing resource opportunities among these students (Bican & Brem, 2020). For those committed to both digital and traditional entrepreneurial avenues, social media is not merely a platform for learning about business models, market strategies, and entrepreneurial skills; it also serves as a vital conduit for establishing network resources and support (Liu et al., 2023). These interactions and resources help to bolster the self-efficacy of vocational students, thereby enhancing the likelihood that they will translate their entrepreneurial intentions into concrete actions.

Social Media Usage, Social Media Marketing, and Social Capital on vocational students aspiring for entrepreneurial success is multifaceted and multidimensional. Firstly, the use and marketing capabilities of social media provide essential market insights and entrepreneurial models, thereby affecting vocational students' emotional behaviors and perceived resource opportunities. Secondly, the social capital established

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through social networks offers vital resources and a support network, key components to achieving entrepreneurial success. Emotional Behaviour and Resource Opportunities, as mediating variables, aiding vocational students in translating their entrepreneurial intentions into concrete actions and ultimately realizing entrepreneurial success.

Conceptual Framework

This framework comprises of independent variables under social cognitive theory (SCT), mediating and dependent variables, which explore social media influence on entrepreneurship success. Resource opportunities and emotional behaviour are used as mediating variables. Entrepreneurship self-efficacy as a moderating variable. this study proposes a conceptual framework as illustrated in Fig1.1.

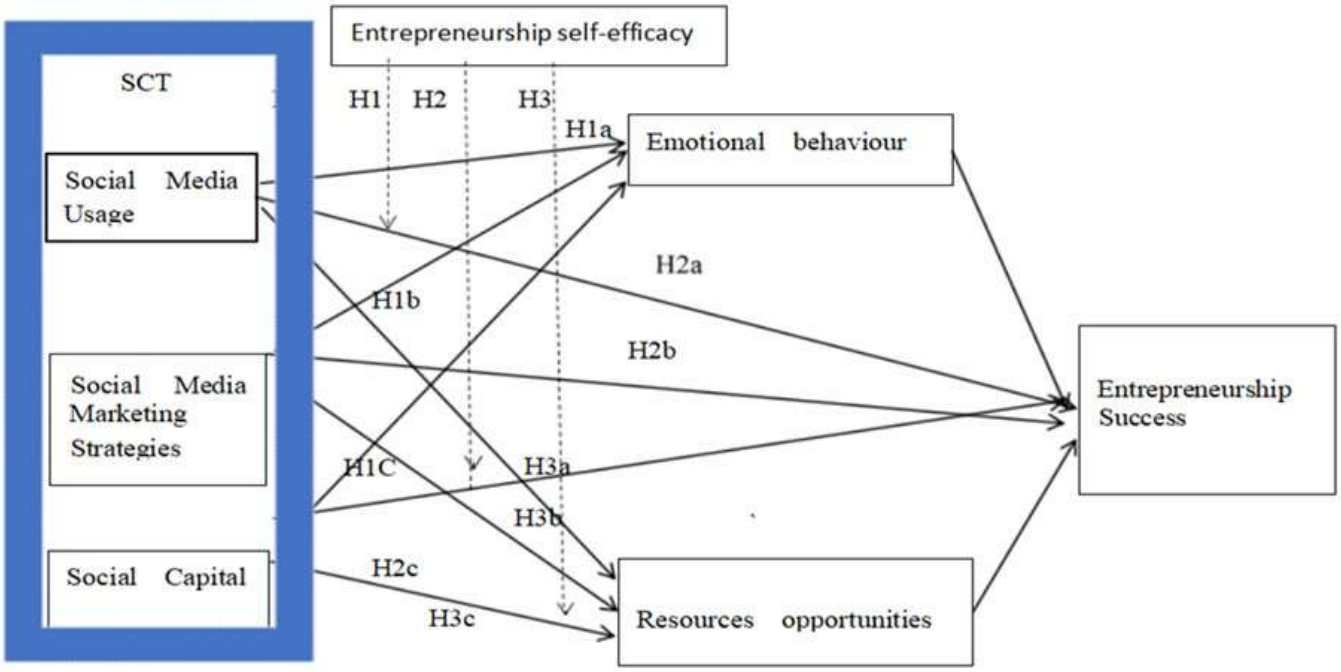

Fig 1. 1 The framework of Social Media Influence on Entrepreneurship Success

This framework comprises of independent variables under social cognitive theory (SCT), mediating and dependent variables, which explore social media influence on entrepreneurship success. Resource opportunities and emotional behaviour are used as mediating variables. Entrepreneurship self-efficacy as a moderating variable.

Hypotheses

Independent Variables

(1) Social media usage

Social media, an amalgamation of hardware and software technologies, facilitates enhanced interaction and information procurement online(Southworth et al., 2023). It serves as a pivotal resource for vocational students aiming at entrepreneurial ventures, providing avenues for gaining insights, networking, and marketing. Recognizing its influence on emotional behavior and access to resources—crucial components of entrepreneurial success—social media has transformed organizational operations by offering benefits such as increased brand value and innovation (Wu, Yang, & Liu, 2023). Furthermore, these platforms enable novel forms of communication and expedite the acquisition of external knowledge, including customer feedback, thereby leading to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H1a Social Media Usage positively influence Entrepreneurship Success.

H2a Social Media Usage positively influence Emotional Behaviour.

H3a Social Media Usage positively influence Resources opportunities.

(2) Social Media Strategies

Social media strategies suite systematic initiatives tailored to digital platforms, aimed at orchestrating content generation, fostering user engagement, cultivating brand identity, and spearheading marketing efforts. Indispensable for vocational students pursuing entrepreneurial success, these strategies augment brand visibility, catalyse network interactions, and distil critical market insights. Collectively, they facilitate a sophisticated and efficacious harnessing of social media, propelling professional growth and business innovation in a contemporary digital milieu.

Furthermore, Entrepreneurial success is closely tied to strategic social media use, enhancing visibility and resource access, while also influencing emotional behaviour and opportunities in the digital landscape. The following hypothesis are proposed:

H1b Social Media Strategies positively influence Entrepreneurship Success.

H2b Social Media Strategies positively influence Resources opportunities.

H3b Social Media Strategies positively influence Emotional Behaviour.

Social Capital

Social capital refers to "resources that exist in a social network that actors can access and utilise". social capital refers to social relationships between individuals with strong ties (e.g. family and close friends).

H1C Social Capital positively influence Entrepreneurship Success.

H2C Social Capital positively influences Emotional Behaviour.

H3C Social Capital positively influences Resources opportunities.

Mediating and Dependent Variables

Entrepreneurship Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy provides the basis for a person's motivation and determines personal achievement. The degree of commitment to an activity. On the other hand, ESE start and manage a business(Javaid, Haleem, Singh, & Suman, 2022).

H1 Entrepreneurship Self-Efficacy moderates the relationship of Social Media Usage and Social Capital to Entrepreneurship Success.

H2 Entrepreneurship Self-Efficacy moderates the relationship of Social Media Usage and Social Media Strategies.

H3 Entrepreneurship Self-Efficacy moderates the relationship of Social Media Strategies and Social Capital to Resources opportunities.

Entrepreneurship Success

We utilized three key indicators to assess entrepreneurial success. Firstly, we examined entrepreneurial survival rate, signifying whether student entrepreneurs participating in the study continued to operate their entrepreneurial ventures (e.g., the first year or the initial three years). Secondly, we focused on entrepreneurial performance, encompassing aspects such as financial

status, sales growth, and market share of the businesses (Suehara Vanity, 2023). Lastly, we investigated customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth referrals by surveying customers of student entrepreneurs, assessing their satisfaction levels, and evaluating their willingness to recommend the businesses to others (Hechavarría & Ingram, 2018).

METHOD

Design

Social media usage (SMU) Social Media Marketing Strategies (SMMS) directly promote entrepreneurship Success (ES), indirectly through Entrepreneurship Self-Efficacy (ESE) as a mediating variable and also Emotional Behaviour (EB) and resources opportunities (RO) as moderate variables.

Sample and data collection

To ascertain empirical support for the hypotheses posited in the literature, this study incorporated vocational students hailing from universities in Hebei. As a result, 248 vocational students who utilized social media to investigate the digital entrepreneurship process in China comprised the sample population. An online questionnaire was administered to them through the student WeChat application in order to evaluate their attributes and aspirations in the realm of entrepreneurship. As a result, this research was restricted to vocational students who were also young entrepreneurs.

This research harnessed the capabilities of SPSS and AMOS software for a comprehensive analysis encompassing reliability and validity assessments, path diagnostics, mediation, and moderation effects. We commenced with a reliability evaluation using Cronbach's alpha via SPSS.

The study culminated with a meticulous path analysis and mediation effect examination through AMOS, supplemented by an exploration of moderation effects utilizing the PROCESS macro within SPSS. The participants are in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of participants

Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	102	41
	Male	146	59
Age Statistics	18–20 years old	211	85
	20–22 years old	37	15
Year Class	2021	15	36
	2022	13	34
	2023	72	178
Parents' Occupation	Entrepreneur	84	—
	Teacher/Lecturer	30	—
	Farmers	55	—

	Civil Servants	79	—
Subject	Management	82	33
	Economic Education	112	45
	Accounting	54	22

The study's participants comprised a majority of students from the classes of 2021 (15%), 2022 (13%), and 2023 (0.72%), at the research level. Furthermore, individuals whose parents are entrepreneurs comprised the highest proportion of respondents (33.87%), whereas civil personnel comprised the lowest percentage (31.85%). In addition, the majority of respondents (45%) are economics majors, whereas accounting students comprise the smallest proportion (22%). A summary of the respondents' demographic characteristics is provided.

Measures

The measurement items utilized in this investigation were obtained from established studies on a five-point Likert scale. Specifically, social media implemented five elements that were adopted with minor modifications (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Abu Bakar, 2018).To determine social media marketing (SMM), five items were utilized, and to determine social capital (SC), five items were applied (K.H.M.A.R, 2020). Entrepreneurial self-perceived creativity was measured using six items from Li and Zhang (2022), whereas the intention phase was the focus of our research. Social behavior (SB) was assessed using five items that were adopted from and nine items were proposed to measure emotional success (ES). A five-point Likert scale was utilized to assess each item, with responses extending from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Measurement model results

We determined that our proposed research model was appropriate through additional testing. In addition, we took into account various factors in order to ascertain the issue of discriminant validity. Each construct's AVE value must be equal to or greater than 0.50, a satisfactory factor loading value must exceed 0.50, a Cronbach's alpha value of no less than 0.70 is acceptable, and a CR value of no less than 0.70 is acceptable.Additional validity and reliability results.

Note. *CA= Cronbach's alpha, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted.

Table2 Descriptive statistics, correlation matrix, and discriminant validity of constructs.

Here’s your correlation matrix in a clean table format:

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Social media usage	0.739						
2. Social Media Marketing	0.370**	0.720					
3. Social Capital	0.303**	0.394**	0.744				
4. Entrepreneurship self-efficacy	0.076	0.150**	0.179**	0.764			
5. Resource Opportunities	0.272**	0.294**	0.237**	0.076	0.711		

6. Emotional behaviour	0.238**	0.217**	0.279**	0.190**	0.260**	0.709	
7. Entrepreneurship Success	0.359**	0.297**	0.389**	0.218**	0.408**	0.392**	0.739

Do you want me to also format this as a **proper APA-style correlation table** with means, SDs, and bold diagonal values?

Note. * Bold values on the diagonal are the square roots of the AVE, shared between the constructs and their respective measures. Off-diagonal elements below the diagonal are correlations among the constructs. Off-diagonal elements above the diagonal are the HTMT ratios of correlations and their respective confidence intervals at 95%.

The relationships among variables are discernible from Table 3. Significantly, the Pearson correlation coefficients reveal that Social Media Usage, Social Media Marketing, and Social Capital are positively and significantly related to Resource Opportunities. These variables also significantly correlate with Emotional Behaviour. Furthermore, it is evident that Social Media Usage, Social Media Marketing, Social Capital, Resource Opportunities, and Emotional Behaviour all positively and significantly contribute to Entrepreneurship Success.

Hypothesis testing results

Using AMOS software, the study built three parallel mediation models to testthe relationships between variables

Tabel 3 SEM Analysis Results （Model 1）

Path	Std. Coeff.	Coeff.	S.E.	Z (C.R.)	P
Social media usage → Resource Opportunities	0.329	0.314	0.189	4.771	<0.01
Social media usage → Emotional behaviour	0.298	0.301	0.167	4.270	<0.01
Resource Opportunities → Entrepreneurship Success	0.333	0.347	0.209	4.767	<0.01
Emotional behaviour → Entrepreneurship Success	0.336	0.331	0.215	4.774	<0.01
Social media usage → Entrepreneurship Success	0.256	0.255	0.131	3.656	<0.01

Table 3 reveals significant relationships between key variables. Social Media Usage positively influences Resource Opportunities (standardized path coefficient = 0.329, Z = 4.771, $p < 0.01$) and Emotional Behaviour (standardized path coefficient = 0.298, Z = 4.270, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, Resource Opportunities (standardized path coefficient = 0.333, Z = 4.767, $p < 0.01$) and Emotional Behaviour (standardized path coefficient = 0.336, Z = 4.774, $p < 0.01$) both significantly positively impact Entrepreneurship Success.Table 5 demonstrates significant mediation effects: Social Media Usage influences Entrepreneurship Success through Resource Opportunities (mediator effect = 0.110, 95% CI: 0.061 to 0. 177) and Emotional Behaviour (mediator effect = 0.100,95% CI: 0.054 to 0. 163), both excluding 0, indicating partial mediation with significant direct effects as well.

Table4 Mediation Analysis （Model 1）

Path	a*b	P	95% CI Lower Limit	95% CI Upper Limit
Social media usage → Resource Opportunities →	0.110	<0.01	0.061	0.177

Entrepreneurship Success				
Social media usage → Emotional behaviour → Entrepreneurship Success	0.100	<0.01	0.054	0.163
Direct Effect	0.256	<0.01	0.130	0.381
Total Effect	0.466	<0.01	0.340	0.575

Table 5 SEM Analysis Results （Model 2）

Path	Std. Coeff.	Coeff.	S.E.	Z (C.R.)	P
Social Media Marketing → Resource Opportunities	0.372	0.341	0.066	5.197	***
Social Media Marketing → Emotional behaviour	0.291	0.285	0.070	4.069	***
Resource Opportunities → Entrepreneurship Success	0.347	0.368	0.077	4.750	***
Emotional behaviour → Entrepreneurship Success	0.360	0.357	0.072	4.977	***
Social Media Marketing → Entrepreneurship Success	0.168	0.163	0.071	2.310	0.021

Table 5 reveals that Social Media Marketing significantly positively affects Resource Opportunities (standardized path coefficient = 0.372, Z = 5.197, $p < 0.01$) and Emotional Behaviour (standardized path coefficient = 0.291, Z = 4.069, $p < 0.01$).It also shows that Resource Opportunities (standardized path coefficient = 0.347, Z = 4.750, $p < 0.01$) and Emotional Behaviour (standardized path coefficient = 0.360, Z =4.977, $p < 0.01$) have significant positive impacts on Entrepreneurship Success.

Table 6 Mediation Analysis （Model 2）

Path	a*b	P	95% CI Lower Limit	95% CI Upper Limit
Social Media Marketing → Resource Opportunities → Entrepreneurship Success	0.129	<0.01	0.076	0.206
Social Media Marketing → Emotional behaviour → Entrepreneurship Success	0.105	<0.01	0.053	0.175
Direct Effect	0.168	0.028	0.017	0.306
Total Effect	0.402	<0.01	0.261	0.526

Table 6 shows that Social Media Marketing's impact on Entrepreneurship Success via Resource Opportunities has a significant mediating effect (mediator effect = 0.129, 95% CI: 0.076 to 0.206) and through Emotional Behaviour (mediator effect = 0.105, 95% CI: 0.053 to 0. 175), with both confidence intervals excluding 0. The presence of significant direct effects indicates partial mediation in both pathways.

Table 7 SEM Analysis Results （Model 3）

Path	Std. Coeff.	Coeff.	S.E.	Z (C.R.)	P
Social Capital → Resource Opportunities	0.298	0.25	0.06	4.309	***

Social Capital → Emotional behaviour	0.355	0.318	0.07	4.989	***
Resource Opportunities → Entrepreneurship Success	0.337	0.359	0.073	4.911	***
Emotional behaviour → Entrepreneurship Success	0.307	0.306	0.07	4.355	***
Social Media Marketing → Entrepreneurship Success	0.288	0.258	0.072	4.002	***

Table 7 indicates that Social Capital significantly positively affects Resource. Opportunities (standardized path coefficient = 0.298, Z = 4.309, p < 0.01) and Emotional Behaviour (standardized path coefficient = 0.355, Z = 4.989, p < 0.01). It also shows that Resource Opportunities (standardized path coefficient = 0.337, Z = 4.911, p < 0.01) and Emotional Behaviour (standardized path coefficient = 0.307, Z =4.355, p < 0.01) significantly positively impact Entrepreneurship Success.

Path	a*b	P	95% CI Lower Limit	95% CI Upper Limit
Social Capital → Resource Opportunities → Entrepreneurship Success	0.1	<0.01	0.053	0.164
Social Capital → Emotional behaviour → Entrepreneurship Success	0.109	<0.01	0.061	0.177
Direct Effect	0.288	<0.01	0.164	0.405
Total Effect	0.498	<0.01	0.386	0.596

Table 8 Mediation Analysis （Model 3）

Table 8 reveals that Social Capital's mediating effect via Resource. Opportunities on Entrepreneurship Success is significant (mediator effect = 0.100, 95% CI: 0.053 to 0. 164), and through Emotional Behaviour (mediator effect = 0.109, 95% CI: 0.061 to 0. 177), with both confidence intervals excluding 0. The presence of significant direct effects suggests that the type of mediation is partial for both pathways.

Tabel9 SEM Analysis Results （Model 3）

Path	Std. Coeff.	Coeff.	S.E.	Z (C.R.)	P
Social cognition → Resources Opportunities	0.514	0.795	0.15	0.294	**
Social cognition → Emotional behaviour	0.487	0.807	0.158	0.093	**
Social cognition → Entrepreneurship Success	0.492	0.806	0.201	0.021	**
Resources Opportunities → Entrepreneurship Success	0.186	0.203	0.197	0.083	0.009
Emotional behaviour → Entrepreneurship Success	0.364	0.602	0.018	0.009	—

Table 9 illustrates that the second-order variable Social Cognition significantly influences the parallel mediation model's pathways. The standardized path coefficient from "Social Cognition to Resources Opportunities" is 0.514, significant at P<0.05, indicating a substantial positive effect. Similarly, the path from "Social Cognition to Emotional Behaviour" has a coefficient of 0.487, significant at P<0.05, denoting a significant positive influence. The pathway “Social Cognition to Entrepreneurship Success" also shows a significant positive impact with a coefficient of 0.492 at P<0.05. Moreover, the paths from "Resources

Opportunities to Entrepreneurship Success".

Through the PROCESS plug-in of spas software, the test of regulation is tested to investigate the regulatory effect of Entrepreneurship self-efficacy variables on the relevant path in the model. The criterion of the regulatory effect is the significance of the interaction, and the specific situation can be seen as Table10.

Moderation Analysis

Model	β	SE	t	p
Social media usage * Entrepreneurship self-efficacy → Entrepreneurship Success	0.313	0.065	4.798	0.000**
Social media usage * Entrepreneurship self-efficacy → Resource Opportunities	0.239	0.063	3.787	0.000**
Social Media Marketing * Entrepreneurship self-efficacy → Resource Opportunities	0.238	0.062	3.809	0.000**
Social Media Marketing * Entrepreneurship self-efficacy → Emotional behaviour	0.195	0.064	3.047	0.003**
Social Capital * Entrepreneurship self-efficacy → Resource Opportunities	0.173	0.058	2.975	0.003**
Resource Opportunities * Entrepreneurship self-efficacy → Entrepreneurship Success	0.3	0.065	4.602	0.000**
Emotional behaviour * Entrepreneurship self-efficacy → Entrepreneurship Success	0.273	0.065	4.189	0.000**

Entrepreneurship Self-Efficacy significantly moderates several paths: its interaction with Social Media Usage shows a notable effect on Resource Opportunities ($\beta = 0.239$, $P<0.05$); with Social Media Marketing, it significantly moderates the impact on both Resource Opportunities ($\beta=0.238$, $P<0.05$) and Emotional Behaviour ($\beta =0.195$, $P<0.05$); and with Social Capital, it significantly alters the influence on Resource Opportunities ($\beta=0.173$, $P<0.05$). Additionally, it significantly moderates the effects of Resource Opportunities ($\beta=0.300$, $P<0.05$) and Emotional Behaviour ($\beta =0.273$, $P<0.05$) on Entrepreneurship Success. Overall, Entrepreneurship Self-Efficacy consistently demonstrates a significant moderating effect across various pathways, underscoring its pivotal role.

DISCUSSION

This study was focusing on social media usage, social media marketing, social capital, emotional behaviour and resources opportunities. By constructing a second-order variable model for the independent variables, the study examines the mediating model pathways of the second-order variable SC.

Research implications

Economic implications

The research study's findings additionally facilitated the recognition of educational implications. Our study reveals a noteworthy positive correlation between the emotional behaviour and resource opportunities of vocational students. This underscores the potential for developing diverse media platforms that possess the ability to captivate consumers and foster confidence. Entrepreneurs who are vocational students may utilize the platform to circumvent a number of startup expenses. The study indicates that SMU/SMM/SC/RO/ESE/EB have a significant positive correlation with ES. Businesses may assess the practicality and simplicity of utilizing particular products so that consumers can derive pleasure from ingesting them effortlessly. Certain industries, such as the cosmetics and beauty accessory, apparel, and fashion product sectors, have distinct concerns regarding usage and consumer trust.

A purchaser may place greater confidence in a student entrepreneur as opposed to an unidentified vendor or a generic online platform. Utilizing social media as a marketplace, the majority of vendors are individuals operating within a recognized network. This could potentially account for the observed significant positive correlation among SMU, SMM, and SC in our study. Student entrepreneurs can accelerate the business process and demonstrate their interest by utilizing social media platforms. Students can gain market exposure as vendors in this manner, typically through the use of social media platforms and a shared brand name, photographs, logos, certifications, videos, accomplishments, and so forth. This may not be suitable for all sectors, it may present new opportunities for buyers and vendors in the food, cosmetics, fashion, and apparel industries, among others. As a result, youthful entrepreneurs are afforded the chance to establish intimate relationships with stakeholders, including wholesalers, suppliers, and other intermediaries. By doing so, all stakeholders associated with the business channel can derive advantages, as "generating revenue and delivering value to customers are the foundations of any business model."

Theoretical implications

The research investigated determinants of entrepreneurial success through an exhaustive literature review. Furthermore, a novel application of social cognition theory was observed in the context of entrepreneurial success analysis. The majority of prior research has applied social cognition theory. Nevertheless, this study employed a comprehensive literature review to investigate entrepreneurship success across social media platforms in general. It is evident that youthful individuals possess a promising future when it comes to establishing their own enterprises utilizing cutting-edge, technology that demands minimal capital outlay. Social cognition and statistical analysis via SEM, where unemployment is severe, and that it might significantly alter their lives. In general, the research findings indicate that the constructs under investigation exert a substantial influence and impact on entrepreneurial development and social media. A robust positive correlation was identified by the model among SMU and ES, SMM and ES, SC and ES, and RO and ESE. Consequently, the research provides support for active engagement on account of the convenience, practicality, hedonic benefit, and social impact that inspire individuals, particularly vocational students, who are preoccupied with or concerned about their prospective professions.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the impact of social media usage on entrepreneurial outcomes among vocational students in China, focusing on the mediating role of technological self-efficacy. Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), a multidimensional framework was developed, integrating social media usage, marketing strategies, and social capital as key antecedents, with emotional behaviour and resource opportunities as parallel mediators. Data from 248 vocational student entrepreneurs were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Results show that social media usage, marketing strategies, and social capital significantly influence entrepreneurial success both directly and indirectly. Technological self-efficacy plays a critical mediating role, while entrepreneurship self-efficacy moderates key pathways, enhancing the impact of resource opportunities and emotional behaviour. Emotional behaviour and resource opportunities also mediate the relationship between social media variables and success. These findings contribute to digital entrepreneurship theory and offer practical insights. The study recommends integrating social media literacy and digital marketing into vocational curricula, fostering technological self-efficacy through experiential learning, supporting networking platforms, and promoting emotional well-being in training programs. In conclusion, vocational students in China can achieve entrepreneurial success by leveraging social media platforms. Cost-effective tools like mobile devices and 4G internet provide a scalable path to entrepreneurship. This study provides empirical evidence that social media empowers vocational students to thrive in the digital economy.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are certain limitations to the investigation. While the literature review examined the opportunity as a whole, the statistical methodology was limited to vocational students. Furthermore, the research was cantered on a specific geographical area in China in order to gather data. The research employed a rudimentary conceptual framework of social capital, which could potentially be expanded upon for future inquiries. The age and gender subsets that comprised the focus of our study could be expanded to a broader demographic through

the application of big data to future research. This research was limited to China, where effective online shopping platforms already exist, thereby facilitating the formation of new businesses by young entrepreneurs. Further research in this area could be beneficial for the body of knowledge by incorporating regional variations and utilizing larger sample sizes, such as national samples.

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