

## UNLOCKING SUCCESS: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AMONG FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

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### ABSTRACT

Owing to entrenched patriarchal norms and practices in the country, female entrepreneurs in Pakistan encounter a multitude of hurdles within the business landscape. Furthermore, similar constraints extend to the support structures designed to aid these budding entrepreneurs. To delve into this issue, qualitative research methods were employed to gather comprehensive insights. Utilizing selective sampling, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten women to explore the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in Lahore, Pakistan. The study revealed that despite encountering various obstacles, such as limited financial resources, female entrepreneurs possess the capacity to navigate all facets of entrepreneurship, largely owing to their social capital.

**Key words:** Female entrepreneurs , challenges , social capital , barriers, ways out

### INTRODUCTION SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is an individual's ability to separate their financial rewards from their participation in different social structures, institutions, and organisations (Davidsson and Honig, 2003). The personal and financial capital of an individual may be augmented by family, community, or other organisations. Social capital refers to a person's ability to distinguish the benefits he or she obtains from social structures, institutions, and participation in these structures, organisations, and activities (Davidsson and Honig, 2003). The personal and financial capital of an individual may be enhanced by family, friends, or other organisations. There are several perspectives, but the majority of connections will be between individual artists (Davidsson and Honig, 2003). Social media activity may be used to get the contact information of a prospective customer.

### NETWORK

According to Ahmad and Naimat (2011), networking may help women entrepreneurs overcome cultural, legal, and religious obstacles. System administration is essential in Pakistan for the development of a business environment that is welcoming to businesses and women entrepreneurs in particular. They agree that Pakistan's culture makes it difficult to develop a business-friendly environment. It is feasible that women entrepreneurs in Pakistan might reawaken, revitalise, and expand the support of women in business by addressing the management of small and medium-sized systems in need of improvement. Greve, A., & Salaff, J. W. (2003) discovered that women were seen differently than males for corporate roles. The bulk of information is transmitted via informal networks. In contrast to males, women have access to many networks and information sources. According to Hanson, S. & Blake, M. (2009), addressing important stakeholders and consultants may be difficult due to the current underrepresentation of women in the business sphere. When evaluating the potential risks associated with a business opportunity, women are

more inclined to seek further information. According to Hanson and Blake (2009), networks and networking are vital for women's commercial success; hence, female entrepreneurs should be successful inside their organisations' networks. According to Spigel, B. (2017), networking is an efficient method for presenting and transferring assets (such as experience and financial resources) and information inside a group in order to create new opportunities. It is crucial for a businessperson to decide whether or not to engage in a system. Since social, social, political, and economic institutions are interconnected, so are their consequences on individuals and the community.

### **Emotional intelligence**

Through the study of emotional intelligence (Emotional Intelligence), psychologists have revealed that women have an edge over males when it comes to learning the abilities essential for a meaningful existence. More businesses are recognising the advantages of Emotional Intelligence in areas such as sales, teamwork, and leadership, which might lead to more possibilities. This regulation may be more important than ever before in the workplace. Males fare better than females when it comes to dealing with negative emotions. Several studies, however, indicate that women are frequently superior than males in terms of comprehension. According to a research, the organisational structures and sizes of male and female entrepreneurs are diverse (Hanson and Blake, 2009).

### **Significance of the Study**

The primary purpose of the research is to investigate how women entrepreneurs develop their enterprises in a conservative atmosphere and how they deal with problems through creating social capital. Consequently, individuals will be more prepared to alter their perspectives about female entrepreneurs and the significance of social capital in their own lives. This research may provide a greater understanding of why women suffer more obstacles than males. This research will shed

light on the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs in Baluchistan, which will be of tremendous use to the higher authorities. According to my understanding, this research will assist individuals in comprehending the difficulties women entrepreneurs in Pakistan experience in competing in such a challenging climate with so many impediments, as well as the degree of success they obtain via social capital coping methods. This is, at least, my interpretation.

### **1.9 Limitations**

In order to generate this paper, the researcher made a particular effort to interact with Lahore's female entrepreneurs. The study identified the lack of female business owners as one of the most significant issues. Likewise, the researcher lacked a list of female company owners of different sorts of enterprises. As a result, the qualitative research used a strategy of purposive sampling. Due to the fact that it is based on the perspectives of Lahore's female business owners, this research has certain limitations. Even though Lahore is a developed city, women confront unique obstacles due to the sensitivity and intensity with which they encounter these obstacles. Therefore, one must be cautious and vigilant while generalising the findings.

### **Research Questions**

How women entrepreneurs cope by establishing the social capital?

### **Research Objectives**

To unearth that how these coping strategies are beneficial and helpful to cope up with challenges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Social Business Network***

Women entrepreneurs and company owners benefit immensely from networks since they get access to mentors and develop a business network via them Adom, K. (2015) Entrepreneurial women, according to Watson (2007), rely on networks comprised mostly of

family and friends when launching firms. However, as their firm expands, they depend more and more on professional networks of financial advisers, attorneys, consultants, accountants, suppliers, government organisations, and others in order to get vital business information. The capacity of an entrepreneur to identify and grab opportunities, organise a team, and mobilise resources is contingent on these networks. In addition, they play a crucial role in reaching milestones like as going public, attaining objectives, merging with another firm, and forming strategic alliances Bjerke, B. (2018). Effective information networks improve the environment for female entrepreneurs as well as the processes and networks in which they participate. McAdam.( 2013) According to Austin, Stevenson, and WeiSkillern (2006), networking may be advantageous for both young and experienced female company entrepreneurs. By networking with other business owners, you may receive expertise about launching and managing a firm, as well as access to cash and inspiration. A network may serve as a testing ground for novel concepts and a conduit for entrepreneurs to have access to nearly identical resources and essentials.

According to Portes, social capital as a notion has exploded in the prior decade (2010). Importantly, these relationships are characterised by attitudes, norms, and values that support the creation of tangible resources for the mutual benefit of both parties.

### **Bridging, linking and bonding**

According to Castells (2004), extrovert movements may be anticipated to expand, but they can also be expected to fade out and not advance. This is due to the interaction between affiliation, communication, the formation of shared values, and trust, which may be used to provide the groundwork for broader participation. According to Holst (2012), social interactions may be simultaneously connecting, bonding, and bridging, and they

can also be flexible. Gender and age are disregarded since they are irrelevant to the scenario. By dismantling a family structure that had enormous social capital across age and gender, class, occupation, and ethnicity, the repercussions became readily apparent. Dahlberg and Moss (2004) define "social capital" as "presence in an environment populated by persons." These interests are not sufficiently diverse, and they are more likely to show formal unity as exposing the movement above small groups or individuals than to facilitate the development of diverse ideas and practises.

Even if it is conservative and restricted to certain sorts of conflict, bonding may be used as a vehicle for change. Sometimes, social movements, such as those headed by people with disabilities, begin with a small group of like-minded people sharing a same ethical code (Crow, 2004). Increase social capital and specialised trust, which may aid those who seek to deviate from the standard in order to build a more successful business. Social capital and relationships must be fortified, and safe groups must be reconceived as more alluring entities. In other words, social capital is merely a small part of a much broader issue. By shifting from groups to networks and interacting with other centres of power, such as labour unions, political parties, educational institutions, the media, and professional organisations, women may gain confidence and recognition. Women are more prone to develop friendships based on their feminist ideas and 'jobs,' although this often results in conflict. According to Adey (2017), people's ethics and perspectives are shaped by their upbringing, hence social capital is of little relevance. Feminist demands are spawning a range of social movements that eventually contribute to the reestablishment of rising ethical standards. In addition, mainstreaming is both a bidirectional and unidirectional process that influences expectations and expression.

All entrepreneurs, regardless of gender, need the same skills, knowledge, capital, and labour

to launch and grow a business. Entrepreneurs may have access to more resources if they use their networks. These connections may assist enterprises in gaining access to social capital, and are therefore a crucial component of favourable networks (Burt, R. S., & Celotto, N. 1992). Numerous research on networks and social capital indicate that, despite their gender-specific interactions, the networks of female entrepreneurs in industrialised nations remain restricted in extent and diversity (Cooper, 1995). According to reports, female entrepreneurs in Pakistan have difficulty meeting their colleagues outside of their homes and doing business in a suitable setting. Chirisa states that women have less access to external financial resources than males (2013). Women are more likely to launch enterprises in the service industry, which requires less technical skills and a lower initial investment than other sectors. The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and the establishment of First Women's Bank (a commercial bank for women run by women) are two instances of the government's initiatives to provide access to capital for female entrepreneurs (for the provision of micro-credits to women). In order to encourage women to create their own enterprises and become entrepreneurs, banking limitations should be loosened for women. As a consequence of the practises, rules, and connections that exist on the ground in a given society, conventions that govern individual responsibilities, expectations, and behaviour evolve. The success of a company relies on its capacity to access the knowledge and resources available via social networks (Yetim, 2008).

## RESULT

### Social capital

Social capital facilitates economic transformation and the coordination of transactions via informal organisations and networks throughout transitions. In a poll, respondents identified "social capital" as the key to commercial success. One of my friend's uncles helped me overcome barriers in the business industry by connecting me with several

organisations. Another responder remarked, "What follows is the sixth and last introduction." For my business to expand, I need the assistance of my family members; they functioned as a bridge to advertise my firm and assisted me in carrying my goods to the store and addressing business matters while I was out of the office. [Int 2] "an additional comment noted: "Forming a mutual organisation was a frequent remedy to the country's lack of infrastructure. Due to the inefficiency of government bureaucracy and the monopolization of business, social networks have emerged as a significant source of revenue."

Due to the inadequacy of socialism's public organisation structure, another respondent commented that "social networks played a crucial role in determining the likelihood of achieving individual goals." In [Int 4], it is said that "Corporate social networks originate in the exchange of contacts as well as group-specific conventions and obligations to advise and support one another; yet, social networks are typically mostly short-term focused interactions but economic success." " Introduce yourself by greeting them with "hello" and "welcome."

### Emotional Intelligence:

Emotional intelligence is a necessary component for female entrepreneurs. When it comes to interpersonal connections, women must be able to analyse circumstances prudently while still expressing controlled emotions with empathy. With the aid of our emotional intelligence, we can comprehend and interact with people more effectively. The more our ability to recognise and respond to the emotions of others, the more effectively we can manage challenging situations.

One respondent said, "It is crucial that I suppress my anger and shame while interacting with people." When I find myself in such a situation, I attempt to refocus my attention on some novel business concepts and strategies.

Emotions influence our capacity to be totally involved in our job, as well as how pleased or unhappy we feel about ourselves and others. According to one responder in [Int. 5], "understanding and regulating our emotions allows us to regulate our anger so that we may have a

demonstrable impact on my team and employee engagement."

Another respondent said, "as one of them put it, maintaining a diary of my thoughts and emotions allows me to be more creative and come up with fresh company promotion ideas and solutions."

## Professional dealings

Respondents also expressed that professional dealings are essential attributes for anyone going into accountancy profession. Professionalism is observing the professional's ethical rules.

As one of the respondent said:

*We should sensitively and fairly serve the best interests of our clients and profession".* [Int. 2]

Another person said, "Real entrepreneurs display their duties in all they do, since professionalism requires the ability to maintain a standard." [Int.3]

According to one reply, an entrepreneur must be ready to tackle any difficulty and come up with innovative solutions regardless of the circumstances [Int. 4]

## CONCLUSION

This research investigates how female entrepreneurs in Lahore, Baluchistan, use social capital to address problems. The objective of the study is to demonstrate how the growth of social networks has enabled these driven, active women to continue to thrive in business despite the hurdles they confront in such a traditional setting. This problem has a direct bearing on qualitative data analysis.

According to qualitative study, women in Lahore's entrepreneur community are well-versed in the art of networking and social capital.

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