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[Factors Effecting the Performance of Women Entrepreneurship in Pakistan]

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine the various factors effecting women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and to analyze how these entrepreneurial factors impact the business performance of female entrepreneurs. The study was conducted from a positivist philosophical perspective. In terms of methodology, the study followed a quantitative and deductive approach. It employed a descriptive survey strategy using a mono method and was conducted within a cross-sectional time frame. Due to an unknown population size, the study utilized G*Power for sample calculation, determining a sample size of 120. Data was gathered from women entrepreneurs through questionnaires and then analyzed using SPSS software. The analysis included descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, demographic analysis, reliability testing, and multiple linear regression models. The study's findings suggest a significant positive relationship between women entrepreneurial factors—such as social, individual, and political factors—and entrepreneurial performance, while a negative relationship was found between economic factors and entrepreneurial performance. The study recommends that the government focus on creating policies that support women entrepreneurs, such as allocating sufficient funding, establishing dedicated desks for women entrepreneurs at both state-owned and private banks to facilitate access to loans, expanding training and capacity-building opportunities for women entering business, and ensuring a transparent communication channel where women entrepreneurs' voices are heard. It also emphasizes the need for government offices dedicated to supporting women business owners and facilitating their participation in the workforce, especially through affordable childcare and workplace equality. Moreover, this study adds to the current body of literature by filling a research gap and emphasizing the significance of examining political factors, individual factors, economic factors, and socio-culture factors, that effect the success of female's entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship, Political factors, socio-culture factors, economic factors, individual factors and Dir.

Introduction

In the 1897 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, the term "entrepreneur" was initially described as "a manager or director of a public music establishment, or an individual responsible for organizing events, especially musical performances." Hisrich and Peters (1992) noted that the term "entrepreneur" was first introduced by Richard Cantillon, an Irish economist in France, in 1725. Cantillon described an entrepreneur as someone who buys resources at a fixed cost and sells them at an uncertain price, thereby taking on risk (Hebert & Link, 1988). The word itself comes from the French term entreprendre, meaning "to undertake," as explained by Singh and Belwal (2008). The term "entreprendre" was first used in early 18th-century France and was understood to mean "intermediary" or "someone who takes on a role between two parties" (Moore and Collins, 1964).

Women entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in the economic development of any country, contributing to job creation, poverty alleviation, and economic diversification. In Pakistan, the importance of women entrepreneurs has gained recognition in recent years as women increasingly engage in various business ventures across different sectors. In

Pakistan, women entrepreneurs are often subject to socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers that significantly impact their entrepreneurial journey. The socio-cultural barriers stem from the traditional and patriarchal structures that dominate Pakistani society, where women face restrictions on mobility, financial independence, and decision-making. These gender-specific challenges can create a hostile environment for women entrepreneurs, making it difficult for them to access resources and opportunities (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2020).

Additionally, the political climate and government policies have a significant impact on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan. Although the government has introduced several programs aimed at promoting women's participation in entrepreneurship, the implementation of these programs has been slow and ineffective. Furthermore, the absence of a gender-responsive policy framework has limited the reach and impact of these initiatives (Hashmi, 2020). Political instability, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure also create an unfavorable environment for women entrepreneurs, hindering their ability to succeed in the competitive business landscape.

The socio-economic conditions in Pakistan, including poverty, unemployment, and economic instability, also influence the performance of women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs in Pakistan often face additional challenges, such as limited access to markets, low purchasing power, and fluctuating demand for their products or services. These economic factors create an environment of uncertainty and risk, which can be particularly detrimental to small-scale women-owned businesses (Siddiqui, 2019). Moreover, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected women entrepreneurs, as they were already operating in a fragile economic environment and faced additional challenges in adapting to new market conditions (Hassan & Nadeem, 2020).

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of Socio-cultural factors on the performance of female entrepreneurship in district Dir?
2. What is the effect of political factors on the performance of women entrepreneurship in district Dir?
3. What is the effect of economic factors on the performance of women entrepreneurship in district Dir?
4. Does the individual factors influence the performance of women entrepreneurship within district Dir?

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the effect of Socio-cultural factors on the performance women entrepreneurship in district dir.
2. To assess the effect of political factors on the performance of women entrepreneurship in district Dir.
3. To examine the effect of economic factors on the performance of women entrepreneurship in district Dir.
4. To investigate the effect of individual factors on the performance of women entrepreneurship in district Dir.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurship and innovation are fundamental pillars for driving competition in both local and national economies. Most countries adopt similar policies for entrepreneurship

and innovation because these areas share common attributes and challenges. The process of innovation, which plays a key role in creating and growing new businesses, is essential for any economy, as it leads to the introduction of new or enhanced products, processes, and organizational models. However, the definition of entrepreneurship varies from country to country, influenced by each nation's economic policies and objectives.

Education has long been recognized as a vital element of an entrepreneur's human capital, contributing positively to business success by Bruderl et al., 1992. CEOs having higher levels of education are more likely to run motivated and successful businesses compared to those with limited or no formal education Wiklund, (1998). Additionally, various studies suggest that educated entrepreneurs tend to be more effective leaders (Hisrich, 1990; Krueger, 1993).

The term "work environment" describes the conditions in which a person works. This can include physical aspects like the temperature of the office or the equipment used, such as personal computers. It also encompasses work-related practices or procedures (Itani et al., 2011).

Conceptual Framework

After reviewing the extant literature on the study variables of political, socio-cultural, economic, individual factors and women entrepreneurship, the current study proposes the following model, which displays the independent variable on the left hand side and the dependent variables on the right.

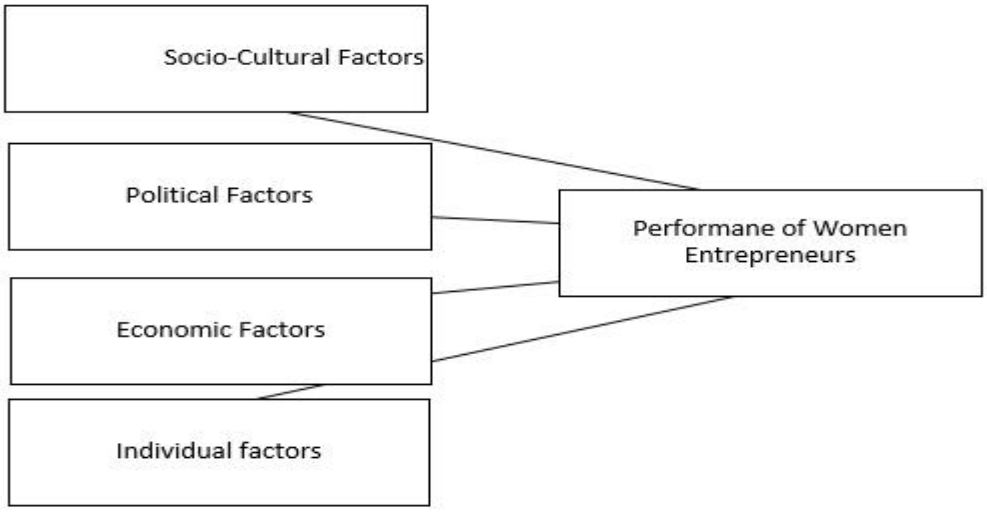

Figure : Conceptual framework of the study

The theoretical framework, shaped by a thorough review of relevant literature, was used to develop a set of hypotheses focusing on female entrepreneurs operating in the Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

H1: Socio-cultural factors have a significant impact on the performance of women entrepreneurs.

H2: Economic factors play a crucial role in influencing the performance of women entrepreneurs.

H3: Individual factors significantly affect the performance of women entrepreneurs.

H4: Political factors have a notable influence on the performance of women

entrepreneurs.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

The current study utilized a deductive approach, which is closely linked to the use of quantitative data (Flick, 2011). Quantitative research involves gathering and analyzing data through numerical methods, which is ideal for efficiently measuring information from a large sample of participants. This approach relies on data that can be quantified to draw conclusions. Unlike qualitative data collection, which tends to be more flexible, quantitative surveys are more structured, typically using questionnaires to gather data in a systematic way.

Research Strategy

The research strategy offers a framework for achieving the desired research outcomes (Saunders, 2007). A well-planed strategy enables researchers to collect accurate and reliable data from participants using suitable research methods. It encompasses various approaches for the data collection and sample selection to address the research goals and questions. These approaches may include surveys, interviews, case studies, experiments, and others. In the current study, a survey-based approach was used, with primary data collected from participants through questionnaires.

Population and Sampling Design

The exact research population for this research is not known; therefore, G*Power was utilized as it does not require prior knowledge of the population size.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling

Sampling is a statistical method used to select a subset of individual, items or data from a larger population. Researchers use these selected elements to understand the characteristics of the entire population. For data collection in this research, a non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling was used.

Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was used to collect data for the current study. A G* power software was used for sample size calculation. As per G* power the calculated sample size is 120.

Sample Size

Saunders et al. (2009) described a sample as a subset of a given population. Since the entire population of women entrepreneurs in Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) was manageable for this study, the research considered all women entrepreneurs in the region—both those running businesses from home and those working outside the home—as the sample. The study aimed to collect data from all of these women entrepreneurs' using questionnaires. It focused on evaluating the performance of women entrepreneurship based on individual, political, economic, and socio-cultural factors.

Sources of Data

The data collection sources include all the avenues through which the information was obtained. Questionnaires was sent via a variety of means. To reach a larger audience, use online survey platforms and social media groups. Paper-based questionnaires were distributed and collected. Using personal networks and referrals to boost participation.

Data Collection Tools and Sources

Data collection method is an essential part of research design, and choosing an appropriate method greatly enhances the study's validity. To collect comprehensive data, a self-administered, well-structured questionnaire was used. The data was gathered using a survey approach.

Reliability Analysis of Data

Cronbach's Alpha (α)

Cronbach's Alpha (α) measure how well a scale represents the true score, reflecting the reliability of the scale. the value of Cronbach's Alpha (α) ranges between 0 and 1, with the higher values representing better reliability (Cronbach, 1951). In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was checked by using Cronbach's Alpha, and the results were satisfactory, as all computed values exceeded 0.70, indicating good reliability (Sekaran, 2003).

Table 1

Cronbach's

Alpha	N of Items
.861	3 4

Measurement Instrument

For data collection, the researcher utilized a questionnaire, which was divided into two sections. Below is a detailed description.

First Section

The first section of this reperch questionnaire gathers information about the profiles of women entrepreneurs, such as their age and educational background.

Second Section

The second section of this research questionnaire explores various factors that impact women entrepreneurs. Details are as follows:

Social Factors

Social factors were assessed through 7 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). These items cover aspects such as the work environment, entrepreneurs' education, family responsibilities, social standing, and professional experience.

Economic Factors

Economic factors were evaluated using 6 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). These items focused on aspects such as access to funding, labor market conditions, marketing difficulties, availability of technology or raw materials, and the impact of inflation.

Individual Factors

Individual factors were assessed through 7 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). These items addressed elements such as personality traits, risk-taking ability, confidence, and motivation.

Political Factors

Political factors were evaluated using 6 items on the 5-point Likert scale. These items included questions related to insufficient government support, the effectiveness of legal and regulatory systems, and the availability of training infrastructure.

Entrepreneur Performance

The financial and operational performance of entrepreneurs was evaluated using 9 items

rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

Results

Table 2: Demographic Analysis

		Age	Education
N	**Valid**	120	120
	Missing	0	0

This study focusses on female entrepreneurs in Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. The sample consist of 120 female entrepreneurs, encompassing both home based and external entrepreneurs. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, and all were completed, resulting in a 100% response rate.

Table 3: Age-wise Demographic Statistics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	95	79.2	79.2	79.2
	2	20	16.7	16.7	95.8
	3	4	3.3	3.3	99.2
	4	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows the distribution of participants' ages. Among the 120 participants, 95 are in the 15-25 age group, making up 79.2% of the total sample. The 26-35 age group includes 20 participants, representing 16.7% of the total. There are 4 participants in the 36-45 age group, which accounts for 3.3% of the sample. Lastly, 1 participant is in the 46 and older age group, representing 0.8% of the total sample.

The accompanying pie chart shown below provides a visual representation of these findings.

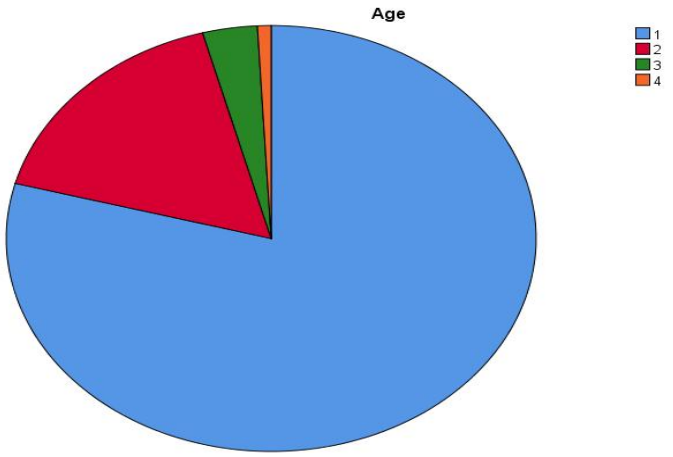

Figure 3 Pai Chart of Gender-Wise Demographic Statistics

Table 4: Education-wise Demographic Statistics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	1.7	1.7	1.7
	2	4	3.3	3.3	5.0
	3	8	6.7	6.7	11.7
	4	95	79.2	79.2	90.8

5	11	9.2	9.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of participants' education levels was examined. The majority of participants (79.2%) were at Level 4 (BS/BSc/MA). Smaller proportions of participants were at Level 5 (MS/MPhil/PhD) (9.2%), Level 3 (FA/FSc) (6.7%), Level 2 (Matric) (3.3%), and Level 1 (Below Matric) (1.7%). These results are summarized in Table 4.3.
The pie chart displayed below presents the same findings in a graphical format.

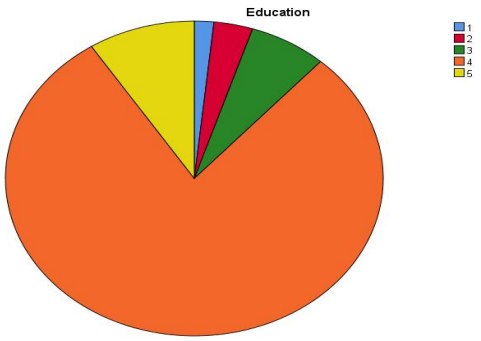

Figure 4 Pai Chart of Gender-Wise Demographic statistics

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis helps determine how consistent the results are when a scale is tested multiple times. A scale is considered reliable if it produces the same or similar results upon repeated testing. In social science research, confirming the reliability of the scale is crucial before proceeding with further analysis. Reliability values range from 0 to 1, with a value of 0.7 or above considered acceptable. If the value is closer to 1, it indicates excellent reliability. There are various methods to assess scale reliability, such as Guttman, split-half, parallel, stringent parallel, and Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most widely used methods for assessing reliability. In this study, scale reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha. The results of the reliability test for the items are presented below.

Reliability Analysis of Socio-Culture Factors

Table 5: Reliability Statistics of Socio-Culture Factors

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.655	7

The table above indicates that Cronbach's Alpha has a value of 0.655, signifying that the questionnaire has a reliability level of 65.5%. As the value is somewhat related to the standard 0.7 therefore, one can say that the variable "Socio-Cultural factors" is moderate reliability.

Reliability Analysis of Economic Factors

Table 6: Reliability Statistics of Economic Factors

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.607	6

The internal consistency of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The results showed a moderate level of reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of .607 across the six items. This indicates that the scale has moderate internal consistency, which could be considered acceptable for exploratory studies or new constructs. However, refining the items further may improve the reliability of the scale.

Reliability Analysis of Individual Factors

Table 7: Reliability Statistics of Individual Factors

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.599	7

The internal consistency of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The analysis indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of α = .599 for the seven items, suggesting that the scale has questionable internal consistency. This result implies that the scale may need further refinement, such as removing items that do not correlate well or reassessing the construct being measured.

Reliability Analysis of Political Factors

Table 8: Reliability Statistics of Political Factors

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.802	6

The table above reflects a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.802, indicating that the questionnaire is 80.2% reliable. Since this value exceeds the standard threshold of 0.7, it can be concluded that the variable "Political Factors" is highly reliable.

Reliability Analysis of Performance of Women Entrepreneurship

Table 9: Reliability Statistics of Performance of Women Entrepreneurship

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.756	9

The table above indicates that Cronbach's Alpha has a value of 0.756, signifying that the questionnaire has a reliability of 75.6%. Since this value surpasses the standard threshold of 0.7, it can be concluded that the dependent variable, "Performance of Women Entrepreneurship," is reliable.

Descriptive Statistics for Factors

The descriptive statistics for the scale items were computed for the sample (N=120N = 120N=120). Table 4.5 displays the means and standard deviations for the items related to political factors, economic factors, socio-cultural factors, individual factors, and the performance of women entrepreneurs.

Socio-cultural Factors (SF)

The mean scores for socio culture factors ranged from M=2.88, SD=1.23M = 2.88, SD = 1.23M=2.88, SD=1.23 (SF3) to M=3.91, SD=1.17M = 3.91, SD = 1.17M=3.91, SD=1.17 (SF7), indicating a moderate level of agreement with these items.

Economic Factors (EF)

Economic factors had means between M=2.82, SD=1.16M = 2.82, SD = 1.16M=2.82, SD=1.16 (EF1) and M=3.20, SD=1.22M = 3.20, SD = 1.22M=3.20, SD=1.22 (EF5), reflecting generally moderate agreement levels.

Individual Factors (IF)

The individual factors' means ranged from M=3.13, SD=1.05M = 3.13, SD = 1.05M=3.13, SD=1.05 (IF4) to M=3.98, SD=1.32M = 3.98, SD = 1.32M=3.98, SD=1.32 (IF7). These items had slightly higher levels of agreement compared to the previous categories.

Political Factors (PF)

The mean scores for political factors ranged between M=2.82, SD=1.17M = 2.82, SD = 1.17M=2.82, SD=1.17 (PF2) and M=3.13, SD=1.28M = 3.13, SD = 1.28M=3.13, SD=1.28 (PF5), suggesting moderate responses.

Performance of women entrepreneurs (PWE)

The Performance of women entrepreneur's items had the highest mean scores, ranging from M=3.30, SD=1.04M = 3.30, SD = 1.04M=3.30, SD=1.04 (PWE1) to M=4.10, SD=1.29M = 4.10, SD = 1.29M=4.10, SD=1.29 (PWE9), indicating a strong agreement with Performance of women entrepreneurs related items.

Regression

In statistics, regression is a method used to examine the relationships between variables. It includes various methods for analyzing multiple variables, with a focus on understanding how a dependent variable is influenced by one or more independent variables (predictors).

Multiple Regression Model

Multiple regression analysis is a method used to assess the relationship between independent variables and a dependent variable, helping to identify the direction of these relationships. It demonstrates how effectively a group of variables can predict a particular outcome. This technique is commonly used to explore the links between a single dependent variable and multiple independent variables (BtFadzil, Al-Swidi, & Al-Matari 2014). In this research, a multiple regression model was used to evaluate how socio-cultural, economic, individual, and political factors influence the dependent variable, which is the performance of women entrepreneurs.

Table 11: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.581[a]	.338	.314	.54503

a. Predictors: (Constant), PF, 00 IF, SF, EF

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between Socio-cultural factors, economic factors, individual factors, political factors: SF, EF, IF, PF and Performance of women entrepreneurs. The overall model was found to explain 33.8% of the variance in the dependent variable (R2=.338R^2 = .338R2=.338, Adjusted R2=.314R^2 = .314R2=.314), with a moderate correlation (R=.581R = .581R=.581). The standard error of the estimate was 0.545, indicating the average deviation of observed values from the predicted regression line. This suggests that the predictors collectively contribute to the prediction of Performance of women entrepreneurs.

Table 12: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.404	4	4.351	14.647	.000[b]
	Residual	34.162	115	.297		
	Total	51.565	119			

a. Dependent Variable: PWE

b. Predictors: (Constant), PF, IF, SF, EF

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship among **PWE** (the dependent variable) and the predictors **PF, IF, SF, and EF**. The overall model was statistically significant, **F** (4, 115) =14.65, p<.001, accounting for a significant proportion of the variance in **PWE** (R^2=.34). This indicates that approximately 34% of the variability in **PWE** can be explained by the linear combination of the predictors.

Table 13: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.427	.317		4.501	.000
	SF	.192	.084	.209	2.292	.024
	EF	-.223	.087	-.249	-2.568	.011
	IF	.461	.096	.444	4.805	.000
	PF	.184	.068	.243	2.717	.008

a. Dependent Variable: PWE

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict **Performance of women entrepreneurs (PWE)** based on **Social-Culture Factor (SF)**, **Individual Factor (IF)**, **Political Factor (PF),** and **Economic Factor (EF)**. The results showed that the model was statistically significant, F (df1, df2) =value, p<.001 (if model statistics are available, replace accordingly).

- **Social Factor (SF)** was a significant positive predictor of PWE (B=0.192, SE=0.084, β=0.209, t(DF)=2.292, p=.024).
- **Economic Factor (EF)** was a significant negative predictor of PWE (B=−0.223, SE=0.087, β=−0.249, t(DF)=−2.568, p=.011).
- **Individual Factor (IF)** had the strongest positive relationship with PWE (B=0.461, SE=0.096, β=0.444, t(DF)=4.805, p<.001).
- **Political Factor (PF)** was also a significant predictor (B=0.184, SE=0.068, β=0.243, t(DF)=2.717, p=.008).

These findings indicate that while SF, IF, and PF positively influence performance of women entrepreneurs, EF has a negative impact. The results highlight the importance of individual and political contributions to a positive performance of women entrepreneurs.

Discussion

This research aimed to explore the factors that influence the performance of women entrepreneurs in Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan. To gather data, a survey was conducted, with a questionnaire distributed to female entrepreneurs in the region. The study focused on both home-based and external women entrepreneurs from Dir, KPK. For data collection, a non-probability convenience sampling technique, was used. The sample size was determined by using G*Power software, which calculated the required number of participants to be 120.

Veteran researchers assessed the face validity and content of the questionnaire used in the study. After a detailed review, they gave their approval for the questionnaire to be used in the data collection process.

To analyze the influence of individual, social, economic, and political factors on entrepreneurial performance, multiple regression analysis was performed. The data supported the model indicating a good fit, with an F value of $F(4, 115) = 14.65$, $p < .001$. Additionally, the R-squared value revealed that these factors explained 33.8% of the variation in entrepreneurial performance.

The regression coefficient for social factors (β_1) was found to be positive, suggesting that a one-unit increase in social factors results in a 0.192 increase in entrepreneurial performance. With a t-value of 2.292, this indicates that social factors have a statistically significant positive impact on entrepreneurial performance. These results align with prior

studies by Roomi (2013) and Rehman and Roomi (2012). Scherer et al. (1989) also examined the role of social factors, particularly the influence of having a parental entrepreneurial role model on entrepreneurial aspirations. Their research revealed that social factors, such as exposure to an entrepreneurial role model, were linked to stronger educational and training goals, greater self-confidence in task execution, and a higher likelihood of pursuing entrepreneurship as a career.

The regression coefficient for economic factors (β2) was negative, suggesting that a one-unit change in economic factors results in a decrease of 0.223 in entrepreneurial performance. With a t-value of -2.568, this finding confirms that economic factors significantly negatively affect performance. These results align with previous studies by Shahid (2010) and Belwar and Singh (2008). Several economic factors, including market challenges, access to capital, technological availability, labor market conditions, high taxes, and inflation, pose significant barriers for women entrepreneurs. Additionally, these findings support Max Weber's socio-cultural theory, which emphasizes the effect of sociocultural factors on entrepreneurial behavior. According to Weber, the values and behaviors of individuals are shaped by the cultural, institutional, and social, environment in which they live (Van de Ven, 1993).

The regression coefficient for individual factors (β3) was the highest positive, suggesting that a one-unit change in individual factors leads to a 0.461 increase in entrepreneurial performance. With a t-value of 4.805, this indicates that the individual factors have significantly positive effect on entrepreneurial performance. These results are in line with previous research by Shahid (2010) and Pines, Lerner, and Schwartz (2010). An individual's family background plays a crucial role in shaping their values and character, which in turn influences their likelihood of becoming an entrepreneur. This aligns with the idea that certain traits, often developed early in life, are key to fostering entrepreneurial success and the emergence of entrepreneurs (Hodgetts & Kuratko, 1998).

Political factors, such as access to training infrastructure, government support, and legal rights, significantly influence the success of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. These factors are essential in shaping their entrepreneurial outcomes. The findings of this study consistent with the Educational Incubation Theory, which suggests that education promotes entrepreneurship by raising awareness and providing new knowledge and perspectives. According to this theory, societies with higher educational levels tend to have more entrepreneurs compared to those with lower educational attainment, with developed countries often serving as examples. This is why educational development has become a key focus in many societies (Block & Stumpf, 1992; Kuratko & Lafollette, 1986; Kuratko, 1989).

Recommendations

Women entrepreneurs face numerous challenges in Pakistan, including financial and financial hurdles, limited access to networks, and difficulties in managing their businesses. However, these obstacles can be mitigated through targeted government programs that offer the necessary financial support for women-led businesses. A significant step forward has been to established a dedicated desks for women entrepreneurs in various public and private banks. These desks have made it more accessible for women to obtain loans with better terms, helping them overcome some of the financial barriers they face.

To support women entrepreneurs in Pakistan, it's essential to challenge the cultural

stereotypes that limit their potential and foster a more positive perception of women in business. Public awareness campaigns can be instrumental in reshaping how society views women's roles in entrepreneurship. Additionally, providing more opportunities for women to develop business skills, particularly in regions like Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), will help them gain the confidence needed to effectively manage and expand their businesses.

To better support women in entrepreneurship, the government should introduce policies that encourage their active participation in the workforce. This could include ensuring affordable childcare options and promoting equal treatment in the workplace. Expanding training programs and opportunities for skill development would also help women acquire the necessary tools to succeed in business.

Future Directions

Future research could broaden the scope of this study to include other regions of Pakistan and examine additional factors that impact the performance of women entrepreneurs.

A mixed-methods approach, by using both quantitative and qualitative data, would provide a more comprehensive view. By incorporating surveys, interviews, case studies, and focus groups, researchers can develop a comprehensive understanding of the various influences on women's entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

This study offers a detailed examination of the key factors influencing the performance of women entrepreneurs in Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan. The primary aim was to explore the factors that contribute to the success and growth of female entrepreneurs in this region. The findings highlighted four main factors—socio-cultural, economic, individual, and political—that play a significant role in shaping their performance. Furthermore, the research identified several challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, fear of failure, including limited experience, family responsibilities, societal discouragement, family responsibilities, and lack of government support.

In Pakistan, women entrepreneurs encounter various challenges, including social and economic barriers, along with difficulties in networking and management. The study aimed to propose strategies to help overcome these issues. Recommended solutions included tackling socio-cultural obstacles, promoting a supportive environment for women in business, expanding educational opportunities, developing infrastructure that caters to women, identifying available business opportunities, and creating networks to connect female entrepreneurs.

The results of this study shows that in societies where women believe in their entrepreneurial abilities, they are more likely to identify and take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities. However, although women view entrepreneurship as attractive, they tend to have less confidence in their own abilities or desire to start a business, and they often lack personal connections with other entrepreneurs. Overall, women are less participative than men to pursue entrepreneurship, with this trend being particularly pronounced in certain economies.

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