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THE ROLE OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS OF PAKISTANI WOMEN IN THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the demographic factors that influence the success of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. The study aims to identify the impact of age and education level on the entrepreneurial performance of women entrepreneurs. The research instrument used in this study is a survey questionnaire that was distributed to a sample of 254 women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. The population of this study comprises women entrepreneurs who are running their own ventures in various sectors of the economy. Comparative analyses were done on the data. The results show that women entrepreneurs who are relatively younger in age are more motivated, initiative, and productive to achieve targets related to entrepreneurial matters. Moreover, the study found that educated women entrepreneurs are more likely to succeed and enjoy more success than uneducated ones. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are provided for policymakers, government agencies, and other stakeholders. Firstly, policymakers should focus on creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs by providing them with access to finance, training, and other necessary resources. Secondly, government agencies should develop programs and policies that specifically target women entrepreneurs and address the challenges they face in starting and running their own ventures. Thirdly, the education system should be reformed to provide women entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their ventures. Finally, further research is needed to explore other demographic factors that may influence the success of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurs worldwide are contributing to their countries' economic growth by creating jobs (Nwakanma, 2021; Parker, 2018). In the entrepreneurial field, women are viewed as a new engine for socioeconomic development. The participation of women in business growth is crucial for economic well-being, according to the Asian Development Bank (1997). Despite a global rise in women's entrepreneurial activity rates, Pakistan's situation differs greatly. Pakistan ranks 132 out of 134 countries in terms of economic activities and opportunities for women (Nadgrodkiewicz, 2011). According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report (2011) Pakistani men have an early stage entrepreneurial activity rate eight times greater than that of females, which is a very high gender gap compared to other efficiency and factor-driven economies. The overall entrepreneurial activity in Pakistan is low, and the rate of women's entrepreneurship activity is 3.43%, which is 4.1 times less than that of men. Women in Pakistan have a higher unemployment rate than men because of the challenging business environment that makes it difficult for women to start and run their ventures (Nasir, Iqbal & Akhtar, 2019). Pakistan is a male-dominated society where men make decisions and control the economy (Matondi, 2013), which is different from other developing countries. Despite various programs like Kaarandaz, PPAF, Rural Support Programs where both private and public sectors are collaborating and are aimed at promoting Pakistani women entrepreneurs, there are still many factors that hinder their development and which interfere in the whole process of initial set up of a venture till its operations that includes conducting research to examine related factors influencing performance of enterprises. One of these factors is the demographics of women entrepreneurs, which significantly affects their success. Most of the current work on entrepreneurship revolves around the problems faced by women entrepreneurs in the work setup in particular (Mahmood et al., 2012). However, very limited research has been conducted on the demographic factors of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan. The present research aims to empirically measure the impact of demographic factors on women's entrepreneurial performance in Pakistan.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

1. To determine the association between demographic factors and performance of Women Entrepreneurs.
2. To analyze the impact of demographic factors on the performance of women enterprises.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does there exist any relationship between demographic factors and performance of Women Entrepreneurs?
2. Do demographic factors affect the performance of women enterprises?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The demographic variables are considering to play a vital role in case of achievement and success within the various regions of entrepreneurs (Soomro,

Abdelwahed & Shah (2019). There is found a core association between demographic variables and entrepreneurial intentions of the professional students (Singh & Singhal, 2015). In Pakistan, a few studies have confirmed the association of the variables (Boonchoo et al., 2013; Haris & Gibsun, 2008; Huang et al., 2013; Singh & Singhal, 2015) but none of these studies focused on women entrepreneurs. After a thorough review of literature age and education has been identified as factors responsible for good performance of the enterprises.

Age

The initiative and energy level of an entrepreneur are directly related to their age. The relationship between an entrepreneur's age and their entrepreneurial behavior has been discussed by Preisdorfer and Voss in 1990. Tenure duration is a crucial factor, as noted by Macrae in 1992 and Birley & Westhead in 1994, and enterprises started at a younger age by a young entrepreneur are more likely to succeed than those started by older entrepreneurs, according to Ullah et al in 2011. Successful entrepreneurs tend to be younger, with the optimal age being between 25 and 40 years old, according to Ullah et al in 2001. A study by (Reynolds et al., 2000) found that individuals between the age of 25 and 44 are proved to be performing well. This finding supports previous research that suggests that starting one's entrepreneurial career at an earlier age is more advantageous than starting later in life (Birley et al., 1994; Macrae, 1992; Preisdorfer & Voss, 1990; Ronstadt, 1983). Furthermore, Kristiansen, Furuholt, and Wahid (2003) have found that there is a noteworthy correlation between entrepreneurial age and business success, with individuals in the early stage of their lives being more productive, initiative, and motivated to achieve targets related to entrepreneurial matters. As far women entrepreneurs are concerned, prior studies have focused on the issue of age and performance (Devine, 2021; Pomeroy & Kingsley, 2021; Taras & Steel, 2022; Bruni & De Massis, 2023) but it is noteworthy that none of the studies have targeted the women entrepreneurs of Pakistan.

Given the lack of information in this area, the following hypotheses are suggested for investigation in Pakistan.

H1: There is an association between demographic factors and performance of Women Entrepreneurs.

H2: Young entrepreneurs will achieve significantly greater success than other age groups.

Level of Education

Level of education of entrepreneurs has received significant research recognition. Studies have shown that entrepreneurs tend to have higher levels of education compared to the general public. (Ali & Rehman 2021; Hirsch et al, 1987; Huang, Y., Liu & Wu, 2022) moreover, an entrepreneur having more years of schooling significantly improves his potential to initiate a venture

having more entrepreneurial orientation (Selz, 1995). Work experience and education are the pivotal drivers of the growth of enterprises (Cooper et al, 1994; Henry et al, 2005; Storey, 1994). The education of an entrepreneur has been conventionally considered as a main determinant of an entrepreneur's human capital that positively affects the enterprise's success (Bruderl et al, 1992; Cha & Lee, 2022). Better educated entrepreneurs are more likely than uneducated entrepreneurs to run a venture smoothly (Wiklund, 1998). Studies assert that educated entrepreneurs are effective in running and managing the organisations (Hisrich, 1990; Hurang et al, 2012; Krueger, 1993; Neneh, van Zyl, & van Noordwyk, 2016; Nordi et al., 2011; Pfeifr, 2001; Roomi, 2013). The research conducted by Djankov et al. (2007) involved gathering data from 550 non-entrepreneurs and 400 entrepreneurs across seven cities in Brazil and it was found that higher education in the family determines the success of an entrepreneur and the smartness of an individual.

As for women are concerned, the literature review reveals some controversy related to the education levels of women entrepreneurs. A study by Kavita et al., 2008 finds out that literate women in general are more inclined towards becoming entrepreneurs than illiterate women and also women entrepreneurs are more educated than males (Cowling and Taylor, 2001; Brush 1992; Mira & Zainol, 2023; Singh, Reynold & Muhammad, 2001). However, other studies like Hisrich and Brush in 1983, Birley et al. in 1987, and Naranjo et al. in 2011 have found that the overall education level of entrepreneurs is the same regardless of gender, while differences exist in the type of education received (Veheul and Thurk in 2001, and Yang & Li in 2011). According to Lee and Rogoll's (1997) study, women business owners tend to have higher levels of education and are satisfied with the education they have received. They also found that women entrepreneurs place a high value on competitive and practical education, which they believe is more applicable to the real world of business. However, this is an issue that gives rise to a great deal of debate. According to studies such as Staw (1991) and Meng & Liang (1996), educational level has been found to be closely related to achievement. Based upon the above information the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H3: There is an association between level of education and performance of Women Entrepreneurs.

H4: Educated entrepreneurs will achieve significantly greater success than uneducated ones.

The present study suggests a model (Figure 1) to investigate the influence of demographic factors on the performance of women entrepreneurs based on the observed relationships.

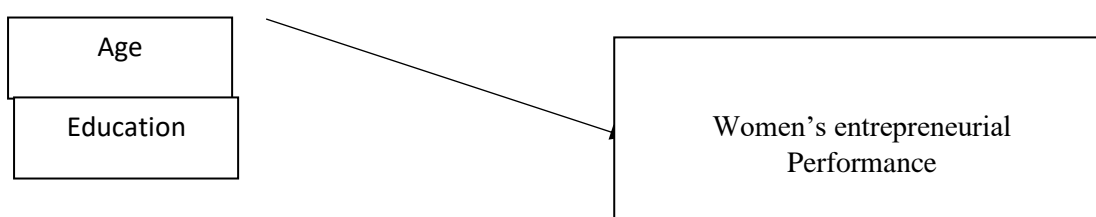


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY*****Research Design***

The study is Quantitative in nature where quantified data was collected and statistical analyses was done on it. The present study adopts a Positivist philosophy which focuses on the testing of a theory using a deductive approach. SPSS Version 22 was used in order to run the tests.

Population and Sample

Registered women entrepreneurs of four cities of Pakistan are population of the study. These cities include Peshawar, Multan, Lahore and Islamabad. Women Chambers of Commerce and Industries of these cities were approached to get data of women entrepreneurs. A figure of 693 was obtained. Systematic random sampling was adopted for taking sample from the population. As per the Yamane (1967), sample size of 253 was obtained.

Research Instrument & Measurement

A self-administered questionnaire was adopted for collecting the data from the target population. The responses of age and education were generated by using dichotomous questions whereas for generating responses of Performance Likert Scale was used. A structured questionnaire was utilized that included both dichotomous questions with "yes" or "no" response choices, as well as multiple-choice questions with predefined answer options, to collect demographic information from the participants whereas the questions to measure Entrepreneurial Performance were adopted from Brush & Vanderwerf (1992).

FINDINGS***Demographic Profile of Respondents***

In the present study, the respondents were asked about their age group, and the results revealed that the majority of the respondents were in the age group of 20-40 (107, 42.3%). This suggests that a significant number of Pakistani women entrepreneurs who participated in the study and were actively running their businesses are relatively young.

According to the present study, the majority of the respondents had a high level of education, including Matric to Diploma/Secondary School/Bachelor Degree (114, 45.1%) and University level education (Master Degree/Doctoral Degree) (106, 41.9%). Only a small proportion of respondents had primary level education (33, 13%). The results give a good picture regarding the

education level of the respondents that educated women entrepreneurs are running their businesses.

The present study asked the respondents whether their education helped increase their level of confidence, and the majority of the participants (203, 80.2%) responded positively, indicating that their education had indeed boosted their confidence. However, 50 (19.8%) members disagreed, stating that education did not help them gain confidence.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	20-40 years	108	42.7	42.7
	40-50 years	91	36.0	78.7
	50 plus	54	21.3	100.0
Education	Primary level	33	13.0	13.0
	High level	114	45.1	58.1
	University level	106	41.9	100.0
Confidence Level	Yes	203	80.2	80.2
	No	50	19.8	100.0

Reliability Analysis

Table 2 provides information on the reliability of the research instrument used in the study. Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the instrument in measuring the constructs of interest. The table shows the Cronbach's Alpha values for the constructs of age, education, and entrepreneurial performance are greater than 0.70 indicates that the reliability of the constructs is satisfactory.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Age	2	0.71
Education	3	0.91
Performance	5	.832

Correlation analysis

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of Age and Performance

		EP	Age
EP	Pearson Correlation	1	.315**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	253	253
Age	Pearson Correlation	.315**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	253	253

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Correlation Analysis of Education and Performance

		EP	Education
EP	Pearson Correlation	1	.233**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	253	253
Education	Pearson Correlation	.233**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	253	253

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficients presented in Table 3 and Table 4 show that the relationship between age and performance ($r=.315$; $n=253$; $p=.000$), as well as education and performance ($r=.233$; $n=253$; $p=.000$), is statistically significant. Hence H1 and H3 is accepted.

Comparative Analysis

To determine if young entrepreneurs experience greater success than their older counterparts, a One Way ANOVA analysis was conducted, consisting of three age groups: 20-40 years, 40-50 years, and over 50 years. Results from Table 5 and Table 6 indicate a statistically significant difference between the groups, as determined by the one-way ANOVA test ($F = 6.381$, $p < .005$). A Dunnett T3 post hoc test was implemented to assess any noteworthy distinctions between the various age groups.

The findings from the One Way ANOVA revealed that employees aged between 20-40 years had the highest entrepreneurial performance. The results indicated a significant difference ($p < .005$) in entrepreneurial performance between individuals aged 20-40 years ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .38$) and those aged 40-50 years ($M = 2.37$, $SD = .55$), while there was no significant difference between individuals aged 20-40 years ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .38$) and those aged 50 years and above ($M = 2.50$, $SD = .48$). Therefore, the analysis supports the claim that younger entrepreneurs have a higher level of success, and as such, H2 is accepted.

Table 5: Compare Means of age groups

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
20-40 years	109	2.6190	.38028	1.70	4.20
40-50 years	90	2.3703	.55583	1.10	3.00
50 plus years	54	2.5093	.48778	1.20	3.00
Total	253	2.5061	.48363	1.10	4.20

Table 6: ANOVA results of age groups

Levene Statistic	Sig.	F	Between Groups (Sig.)
9.822	.000	6.831	.001

Table 7: Multiple Comparisons across age groups

Age	Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
20-40 years	40-50 years	.24865*	.06880	.001
	50 plus years	.10972	.07580	.386
40-50 years	50 plus years	-.13893	.08832	.313

To determine if educated entrepreneurs experience greater success than those with less education, a One Way ANOVA analysis was conducted, consisting of three categories: Primary, High Level, and University Level. The results of the study indicated a statistically significant difference between the groups, as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F = 11.386$, $p < .001$). A Dunnett's T3 post hoc test was used to determine which specific groups exhibited significant differences.

The One Way ANOVA results demonstrated that the perception of entrepreneurial performance was highest among University level entrepreneurs. The analysis revealed a significant difference ($p < .005$) in entrepreneurial performance between individuals with primary level education ($M = 2.14$, $SD = .58$) and those with High Level education ($M = 2.54$, $SD = .41$). Additionally, there was a significant difference between individuals with primary level education ($M = 2.14$, $SD = .58$) and those with university level education ($M = 2.57$, $SD = .47$). Therefore, the analysis supports the assertion that educated entrepreneurs experience greater success, and as such, H4 is accepted.

Table 8: Compare Means of Education level

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Primary level	33	2.1485	.58982	1.25	3.00
High level	114	2.5430	.41391	1.20	3.00
University level	106	2.5778	.47339	1.10	4.20
Total	253	2.5061	.48363	1.10	4.20

Table 9: ANOVA results of Education

Levene Statistic	Sig.	F	Between Groups (Sig.)
6.963	.001	11.386	.000

Table 10: Multiple Comparisons across education level

Education	Education	Mean Difference	Sig.
Primary level	High level	-.39450*	.003
	University level	-.42935*	.001
High level	University level	-.03485	.916

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate a significant disparity in entrepreneurial performance among different age groups and levels of education. The age of an entrepreneur has a direct correlation with their energy and initiative level. The results of the research reveal that younger entrepreneurs have a higher likelihood of success. These findings support the claims made by previous studies, including Birley et al. (1994), Kristiansen et al. (2003), Macrae (1992), Preisdorfer & Voss (1990), and Ronstadt (1983), which suggest that individuals aged 21 to 40 years are more likely to achieve success as entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs of this age are more motivated, initiative and productive to achieve targets related to entrepreneurial matters. Majority of women in the study were in the age bracket of 20-40 years which reveals that young women are entering into the field of entrepreneurship in Pakistan and taking steps towards acting entrepreneurially.

This study measured the level of education based on three categories: primary level, high level, and university level. Majority of the respondents had high level of education (Matric to Secondary School/ Bachelor Degree). The study's results indicate that individuals with occupational experience had higher entrepreneurial performance than those without any occupational experience. Therefore the results confirm the findings of studies conducted by Bruderl et al, (1992); Cooper et al, (1994); Cowling and Taylor, (2001); Henry et al, (2005); Hisrich (1990); Hurang et al, (2012); Krueger, (1993); Pfeifer, (2001); Roomi, (2013); Selz, (1995); Storey, (1994); Wiklund, (1998) that educated entrepreneurs are more likely to succeed and enjoy more success than those who are uneducated. In order to become a successful entrepreneur, it is the education that creates awareness in him which helps him to make right decision for the enterprise which in turn enhances the performance. In Pakistan, education level is very low in comparison to our neighboring countries but as far Pakistani women entrepreneurs are concerned, the results of this study state that majority of the successful women entrepreneurs are educated which is very encouraging. The results are surprising as majority of women entrepreneurs are doing home based businesses and are mostly involved in handicrafts and boutique, it is believed that as they are not educated that's why running the businesses where skills are required. Contrary to this notion, the findings disapprove the fact that they are uneducated; rather it gives a valuable insight into the demographic profile of women entrepreneurs in terms of their educational status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As age plays an important role in good performance of an enterprise because young entrepreneurs are found to be more enthusiastic hence it is strongly suggested that the policy makers should put in efforts to initiate training programs for such young and dedicated entrepreneurs. Success stories of young women entrepreneurs should be broadcasted so that entrepreneurial culture is developed in Pakistan. Young, educated and dedicated women entrepreneurs should also be presented as role models and government programs must be directed towards their empowerment. Online portals and databases should be made where such entrepreneurs can gather and share their knowledge and expertise with others.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study is restricted to women entrepreneurs in four cities of Pakistan who are registered with women's chambers of commerce and industries of Pakistan. Furthermore, only two of the demographic factors i.e age and education have been taken into account in this study. Future scholars may generalize the findings by targeting women entrepreneurs of all the major cities of Pakistan. Future scholars may consider incorporating unregistered and rural-based Women-Owned Businesses (WOBs) into their research to gain insight into the problems and challenges faced by these women. This would contribute something new to the existing body of knowledge and aid policymakers in devising policies that address the unique needs of these women.

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