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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to look into the challenges women business owners in Pakistan confront, the opportunities available to them, and how social media can improve their knowledge and business skills while also promoting women's empowerment. Qualitative methodology was used for this exploratory research using phenomenological approach. Result of this study have been broadly categorized into eight major themes that contribute to women entrepreneurs success including Socio-Economic Factor, Family support, Entrepreneur's skills, Well-being & Work life balance, Dynamic Environment, Utility of social media, Entrepreneurial support & education and E-Commerce. The present study shows the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurship in supply chain dynamics is multi-dimensional and they are related to all these factors. Since this study is one of early ones to consider exploring the challenges and opportunities of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and provides a deeper understanding on the subject so, it has practical implications for dealing with the social issue especially in the local context of Pakistan. The results of this study can be used by numerous organizations to create learning & growth materials, improving the lives of female entrepreneurs. The study has also suggested the need for further research on the subject, as in addition to qualitative, quantitative studies can be conducted. By using the research study as a foundation and building it in quantitative research, there are many opportunities for expanding the research.

**Keywords:** Women Entrepreneurs, Social Media, Empowerment

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

Entrepreneurship is the action to set, up create, and run a modern commerce, whereas confronting all the risk for creating benefit and it is gender discrimination free supply chain. Over the world, entrepreneurship is considered as fundamental source to conclusion unemployment, destitution and low paid economy. The establishment of unused commerce wanders and fast development in existing businesses are significant input within the economy. It has been watched that the economic development of a country cannot be conceivable without the advancement of females. Women empowerment in supply chain and cooperation is defined as an important instrument for the improvement of a country and supply chain itself and to attain this conclusion, entrepreneurship is widely regard as the foremost practical alternative. Female entrepreneur implies a woman confronting the entire hazard in arrange to satisfy her needs and have financial freedom. Women entrepreneur is said to be women who start and setup a business undertaking and go through encountering development, hazard taking, integrate and leadership throughout the supply chain. (Nasir et al., 2019).

Women's empowerment and taking the stand for women social justice has become a prominent social revolution these days which has been pushing the boundaries. Initiatives such as International Women's Empowerment Day are getting prominence, many significant advances, still women and females continue to experience discriminatory practices in almost every country (Vision, 2019).

Women's empowerment, in and itself, includes the implementation of an atmosphere in which they can make full effort in planned decisions and choices in a specific setting. Because the concept is so wide, quantifying it has always proven difficult. Prior studies have found various early implementation techniques and metrics to measure the complicated idea as a result of this issue (Abbas et al., 2021). In Pakistan, women's empowerment is highly influenced by a variety of factors, including their local area (metropolitan), educational levels, social background, and age. Working women in Pakistani supply chain have traditionally attempted to improve the economic independence of their family, but their efforts are unfortunately underestimated. Encouraging women on a societal, financial, intellectual, cultural, and legal level throughout the supply chain has always been a tough challenge in a developing economy (Asghar, 2018).

Women have been continuously weakened, humiliated, and subordinated in all cultures around the world for the last four centuries. Men believe that they really are think women deserve to be controlled because their emotions are unstable (Naheed, 2008). Women's oppression starts with in home, as parents differentiate among both daughters and sons. Possibly a poor family will try to send their sons to good educational institutions to receive a better education, while their daughters will attend public schools or even none at all. Families with a lot of money send their males to prestigious schools and their girls to schools and institutions that are regarded sub-par in terms of performance. On the one hand, it reflects our society's substandard mentality and conduct, as well as the colonial mind set of the male dominated group. On the other hand, in the twenty-first century, with the expansion of education, it is a problem that our culture and system are unable to provide equal chances to women (Sabir, 2020).

### 1.2. Women's social media accessibility and role in Pakistan:

With the rise of cellular phones, particularly smartphones, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become popular ways of connecting different streams of supply chain within Pakistan for global exposure. These social media platforms not only communicate effectively, but they also play an important part in women's empowerment in supply chain sector (Lodhi, 2018).

While virtual communities allow people to communicate, they can also be used for e-commerce (Lodhi, 2018). Many women choose social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Snap chat over traditional business models, reducing their reliance upon others, improving supply chain efficiency by becoming online entrepreneurs. Women who are facing difficulties in supply chain

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sector have turned to social media for assistance. Women nowadays are able to easily start a business using social media, as they can now manage their families and work from home. For women who want to make a difference in their lives, the thought of managing a business and its supply chain from home while still being able to serve a big number of clients is appealing (Atique, 2018).

### **1.3. Research Problem**

Women entrepreneurship in supply chain sector is among the country's core concerns and challenges women facing for empowerment and self-esteem deserve attention. There are abundant occurrences (Buledi, 2021) that civilizations separating gender suffer from higher unemployment, low development, and poorer standard of living, while women equality promotes higher growth. Women and girls who are empowered can become important factors in their local populations, contributing in welfare of their societies. Gender inequality results in a significant impact on lives of people and their potential for betterment as well as progress (Buledi, 2021).

As per the scoping and topical review of the literature, there is not dearth of research in the related field in Pakistan. The exploratory research on the subject of challenges of women entrepreneurship needs to be published because there is lack of published article from Pakistan for the above mentioned subject. However, this research study proposed to bridge the gap.

### **1.4. Research Question**

This study aims to answer following research questions:

- What are the challenges women faced in enhancing entrepreneurship roles?
- How social media influences females to enhance women entrepreneurship in supply chain sector?

### **1.5. Research Objective**

Core and sub-objectives are as under:

- To know the challenges to women entrepreneurship in Pakistan.
- To know the contribution of Social Media to enhance women entrepreneurship and its supply chain.
- To establish understanding into the role of social media in women's entrepreneurship.
- To find out how digital media businesses may help you combine work and family responsibilities.

### **1.6. Justification**

This research can provide important details on how today's women perceive their entrepreneurship position. I believe there is quiet a necessity for all us to recognize that women nowadays are capable of doing anything. Women's entrepreneurship, empowerment and freedom, as well as advances in their legal, cultural, financial, and lifestyle factors, are all essential goals to choose for themselves. The significance of this study lies in finding some ways to portray women as a market leaders and how they faced real life challenges despite facing backlash and gender biasness. This research is useful in understanding the current shift of women in Pakistan using digital platforms. The most essential thing for women is to realise that social networking isn't only for pleasure. It is a platform of learning, growth, and empowerment for women. This study will be most important to understand how social media is helping women entrepreneurship in supply chain industry and allowing women to connect not only with other women who are building businesses but with their idyllic customers.

### **1.7. Scope of the Research**

This study involves exploratory research method.

- This study will cover the concepts of women entrepreneurship in supply chain sector and empowerment. Other than that we will cover the social media topic particularly practices and implication
- The study will also address a number of ongoing topics and concerns related to women's entrepreneurship in society, as well as make some strategic progress advices.

### **1.8. Definitions**

Following core concepts are used in this research study:

#### **1.9. Women Entrepreneur**

Chapter 1A woman entrepreneur is known as self, imaginative, and intellectual woman who, alone or in-cooperation, provides job possibilities for others by founding, constructing, and maintaining a business while balancing professional, home, and social responsibilities.

#### **1.10. Social Media**

Social Media is a place where people construct virtual forums to exchange thoughts, beliefs, direct posts, and many other data via modes of digital information (like Facebook or LinkedIn and twitter).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Women entrepreneurs within supply chain sector in Pakistan**

Entrepreneurs are important players in implementing and maintaining socioeconomic progress. As shown in a study, countries with a high proportion of entrepreneurs are more urbanized and on the road to progress than countries with a lower proportion of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is linked to "push" and "pull" variables. Lack of job prospects, frustration with being within control, and unsupported government agencies are all push causes; on the other side, pull elements include the need for identity and achieving life goals (Adeel, et al., 2012). This is the reason most of the population trying to be job creators now rather than be jobseekers.

Women entrepreneurs within supply chain sector in Pakistan are becoming more common and important across the world. It is particularly evident in emerging markets, when the transition has resulted in significant economical, sociological, and political changes (Ramadani & Dana, 2013). Female involvement in supply chain industry is a primary factor behind the nation's growth of the economy (Vossenber, 2015). In another study it was remarked that females in businesses' supply chains are significant since they provide jobs for both herself and young women (Welter et al., 2003). Furthermore, females owned private companies help broaden their expertise and improve their skills, and they play a part in reducing discrimination against women in the industry (Ramadani et al., 2015). Women-owned enterprises enable ladies to act for the benefit of their families while also enhancing their

social interactions. Furthermore, it improves women's independence and enables females to play a significant role in the general improvement and progress of the society. As a result, female entrepreneurs provide additional work opportunities for younger female (Ramadani et al., 2015). Current studies on women's entrepreneurship show that socio-cultural elements contribute in the entrepreneurial. Socio-cultural elements are defined as an intangible element that encompasses the culture of individuals living in a society, as well as their rules of conduct, conventions, attitudes, and behaviours when it comes to interpreting something. The social structure in which a person lives and cultural norms they follow are both socio-cultural elements. This phrase refers to the intangible factors generated by man that primarily influence person's attitudes, perceptions, and style of life (Nasir et al., 2019). Many sociocultural elements, such as religious, conservative values, relationship status, and so on, influence women entrepreneurs (Naser et al., 2009). When contrast with bachelor or unmarried females, married women are restrained by their family duties to fully engage in business activities. They are bound to perform their personal duties and less focus on their life goals.

Women's entrepreneurship is usually viewed as a means of escaping poverty and achieving equality. Participation in women entrepreneurs in supply chain sector from a various backgrounds has resulted in an increase in the amount of information found in the literature about female's entrepreneur's supply chain challenges. In the early stages of a company's development, capital generation is a frequent problem (Aslam et al., 2013). Some studies reported that in the case of women entrepreneurs, capital concerns are very important. Women entrepreneurs find it difficult to raise funding for their businesses caused by social situation and family concerns. Additionally, previous research have found that related to their socioeconomic situation and gender-biasness, women are unable to secure financing, develop a type of business model, or keep positive connections with financial institutions (banking) than males Women entrepreneurs encounter challenges in getting finance and angel investors, mostly because financial institutions are hesitant to lend to female businesses given the risk involved In another study the researcher found that women's growth is hampered by gender inequality and a low social support. Women become fragile and unable as a result of male domination in businesses. Women who are illiterate have a lower level of development and success than men. Inability to take risks, family instability, government policy, and financial aid Women develop unfavourable views as a result of a lack of information, support networks, and prejudice. Women confront challenges in the family company as well. Also in family owned business, women do not have the same authority as male member.

Previous literature highlights that in the work force, female face a disparity. Women struggle with a lack of emotional and an unwillingness to take risks. Women don't even have landholdings because they are a minority group. When a woman needs a financing for a company, she must obtain authorization from a male guardian (Makombe, 2006). Gender biasness, a low social support, and poor access to knowledge are all important barriers to women entering the professional world When examining underdeveloped nations like Pakistan, wherein societal and family hold over women, reliance on men, and movement constraints generate disparities in right to schooling as well as other critical associated facilities, a different methodology is required (Roomi & Parrott, 2008). Aside from all of the issues, women confront a number of hurdles, the most prominent of which include unveiled rules, difficult relationships due to discrimination, reliance on men for trades, and more barriers faced on them during comparison to their male colleagues (Ahmad, 2011). As obtain from literature gender discrimination is one of the most important barrier for the success of women entrepreneurship.

Sociocultural elements, entrepreneurial qualifications and experience, environmental variables, personal responsibilities, gender inequality and capital considerations are the six most important components found in the literature.

## **2.2. Research Gap**

As per study conducted, from Pakistan, there are no extensive international publications on subject of supply chain challenges of women entrepreneurship. Therefore, the factors and reasons that result in identifying the challenges women faced for entrepreneurship in Pakistan are not yet well understood.

In light of the importance of women's entrepreneurship in terms of challenges and opportunities in supply chain industry, the current research will look into the factors that influence women entrepreneurs in Pakistan in reaching the goal they require and reducing the gender injustices in male dominated Pakistani culture and the goal of this study is to use an approach of qualitative based study to explore and analyse the factors associated with challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses in Pakistan.

## **3. Research Methodology**

The philosophical approach in this research is related to phenomenology due to its subject related to people lived experiences. This paper employed qualitative methodology to examine the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses in Pakistan. Research Strategy. While obtaining information for this qualitative study, we used semi-structured interviews to get the actual viewpoint or responses. The questionnaires we used were descriptive in nature for this research. We chose qualitative data to get detail and in-depth knowledge by interviews because we'd like to look into the issue's implications. The target population are women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses who are doing businesses in different cities of Pakistan. The following eligibility criteria used for studying the respondents: challenges faced by women in supply chain industry, women in their dynamic times, working in the metropolitan cities of Pakistan and establishing and managing business since at least more than 1 year, alone or with shareholder(s). The interviews soliciting their experiences about how they are utilising different platforms in their dealings and how it has affected their lives. The interviews hence conducted with the goal to have a quick glimpse at how well these women runs their businesses managing their regular tasks and personal lives. In terms of sample size, because this is a qualitative research, the sample size totally depends until the time data saturation is reached. This research uses a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling techniques. The interviews were conducted with the respondents between December 2023 and January 2024 at mutually convenient times. Face-to-face and over phone semi-structured interviews were undertaken. All interviews were audio recorded for further proceedings.

A pilot interview was conducted with two selected respondents using a semi-structured questionnaire to ensure that the questions asked were understandable to the respondents (Majid et al., 2017). Open ended descriptive questions and sub-questions that were

asked of subjects during the interview are attached as Annexure – A. Data was analysed through thematic analysis using coding. Through Qualitative Research this study attempts to determine:

- Women entrepreneur confronting the issue of gender discrimination within supply chain sector.
- Women entrepreneur facing lack of training and education.
- Women entrepreneur facing problem in balancing supply chain businesses and family life.
- Women entrepreneur have very limited or no access to finance.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Participants Profile Analysis

As stated in the methodology section, respondents that were chosen for the study included 2 for the pilot study (Majid et al., 2017), ten for the final interviews, and 2 additional personal interview to ensure no new topics were forming. Saturation was reached by the 9th case. Only two respondents were between ages of 40 and 49, whereas 75% of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 39. After the age of 50, there is a significant decline in the likelihood of beginning and operating a venture. Only one response, though, was under the age of 20. The second noteworthy conclusion is that compared to other Pakistani women, women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses have fewer children on average. Mostly respondents only had one or two kids. Also, women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses have a far higher level of literacy than the general population. Details are displayed in Table 1 (Interview participant profiling) at the end in Annexure – D.

### 4.2. Results of Coding from Thematic Analysis

Interviews with 12 participants served as the basis for the findings. Similar sentiments and views from the respondents appear in the findings and are presented collectively. The coding results are shown at the end of this chapter in Table 1, which illustrates the identification of new categories and themes that emerged throughout the content analysis from the semi-structured interviews. Data are summarized within this context in detail. Below, each topic will be thoroughly explained.

### 4.3. Socio-Economic Factor

Socio-economic factor emerges as a theme for challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses. It comprised of six categories which are gender discrimination, social acceptance, harassment, perceived social respect, funding and economic condition.

**Gender Discrimination:** Gender discrimination been cited as one of the main factor for women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses as it is the biggest challenge for them. In this regard one of the respondent (C4) stated “In Pakistan for female to run a supply chain business is very challenging. Our society is male dominated society here are less chances for women to come and start-up their business. It’s much difficult in a society surrounded by men basically its gender biased”. Other participant (C5) stated about gender discrimination where they are less in number “Women in supply chain business in Pakistan is much challenging because they are less in number in compared to men. It’s a male dominated society. Being a women it is difficult to survive supply chain business in Pakistani society”. Two more participants (C8 and C11) talked about men only consider male for business “I think all females faced challenges in starting up their business because this is male dominated society and lack of communication between men and women. Distributors and investors don’t take women seriously as they take men serious. So we faced issues in access to finance and availability of anything” “There are less market facilities available for females they can’t go there and sell their product because those areas are totally surrounded by men and we can’t setup our shop and line”.

**Social Acceptance:** In Pakistan, society has a significant impact on both genders, but social pressure is particularly strong for women in supply chain business. In this regard one of the participant (C1) stated “I think women entrepreneur of supply chain businesses in Pakistan are facing much society pressure. People criticize them a lot, they don’t accept women working so they lose hope to achieve anything”. Other participants (C6 and C10) talked about how society don’t accept women and take them serious “At the start society think that you aren’t serious just doing the work for work and time pass. People don’t take you seriously” “As I am woman and when I started my business in Pakistan at that time what I feel was hard to explain but I will try to cut it short. Women entrepreneur in Pakistan they are facing challenges like criticism society don’t accept them. They say means things like you are doing business, wants to compete with men etc. social pressure is very high is Pakistani society”.

**Harassment:** The act of disparaging or dangerous behaviour aimed at a particular employee or a group of employees is known as harassment in the workplace which was identified by participants. One participant (C5) stated “Being a women it is difficult to survive supply chain business in Pakistani society. We face challenges like work harassment, societal pressure on daily basis”. Another participant (C12) reported incident in her life regarding harassment “When I started my business I was constantly facing incidents of harassment with the people involved in my business that was the challenging part of my initial struggling times. I’ve to deal with those people”.

**Perceived Social Status:** This category was recognised by many women entrepreneurs. Participant (C2) talked about the importance of social status “When the society will see your accomplishment and how it benefitting your family then eventually you’ll get respectable position in the society”. Other participants (C4 and C6) told us about their life experience how they get social status after hard work “There is a mind-set that women can’t work they are born just to raise their family and look after home but after sometime it was all fine because I stay consistent and my passion to achieve something in life keeps me motivated. Society eventually by time they witness my success and I was managing my family and earning for them so eventually I got respectable position in the society. Your work speaks for you” “When your business is at some level people start recognizing you and give respect”.

**Funding:** Almost all respondents provided consistent responses about funding as per our data. Participant (C4) stated her experience “The biggest challenge I faced in my start-up stage was finance. I got so much difficulty in finding money for my business but slowly somehow it was managed”. Another participant (C1) stated how it was difficult to access finance “Pakistani society is much male oriented so female find it difficult to get finances from their male counterparts for start-up because men manages all the finances in our society”. Getting funds from family also is an issue which stated by participant (C5) “First major issue was to arrange finance for my start-up as I wasn’t from rich family they can’t finance me in my business. They spend much on my education it was more

than enough from my family side. To arrange finances was very challenging for me”.

**Economic Condition:** This factor was recognized by more than one participant as we are living in third world country so we often faced issues regarding economic conditions. In this context, one participant (C1) stated that “These days economy getting really bad and when one person in home is earning it is not sufficient for the family so I think women should come up with own ideas and creativity and help their family in this crucial times”. Another participant (C3) reported about economic condition “Nowadays in Pakistan there are so many women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses because of the rise in population and economic condition women are into business and supporting their families”. Women also talked about rising inflation issue they faced while doing business. Participant (C6) stated “Challenge I faced was the inflation rate prices going up for everything there is no sustainability in any business. Providing quality products in affordable prices is most challenging for me”.

#### 4.4. Family Support

Our data set revealed that they had to persuade their families to pursue entrepreneurial activities in Pakistan; based on this finding, we believe that Pakistan's societal norms have a substantial impact more difficult for women. One of our participants (C3) offered her thoughts or experiences regarding this difficulty she had while attempting to run her own business. She stated “Actually, my parents opposed my profession. After I finished my education, they wanted me to get married. I had a pretty difficult time persuading my parents to let me work. Despite having a degree in accounting and finance, sketching was my first love. They also had an issue with the business I chose. They believed that if I wanted to work, I should pursue a career in academia”. Another participant (C7) stated “At first, it was quite challenging to convince parents that all profession options are highly respected and therefore it is OK for your children to choose careers other than those of a doctor or an engineer. When inflexible attitudes become normal and you engage with someone who is old enough to have less mental flexibility, it might be difficult to change them”. As evidenced by our respondents, women entrepreneurs have challenges beyond only obtaining financial or familial support; they also require moral support. Almost every participant in this study who responded said that women need both monetary and moral support. One interviewee (C5) shared her experience “Actually my parents are very cooperative they always motivate me since the start till now”. Another participant (C4) stated how she encountered demoralization from her family “It was family pressure who were not allowing me to work at the start. They were like you don't need to go out you can't compete with men actually they demoralize me that your business would be a complete failure because of your lack of business knowledge”.

#### 4.5. Entrepreneurial Skills

Five categories are mentioned for entrepreneurial skills showing significance of how these can have impact on women entrepreneurship. Categories include in this are communication, networking, managerial (POLC), time management and soft skills.

**Communication:** Respondents admitted to having communication problems with their suppliers when we questioned them about it during interviews. Participant (C10) stated “Also, men view women as weak in our culture. So, communication with them is very much difficult. But I stood my ground and showed everyone what I'm made of. Now people regard me as a strong lady. You must challenge people' assumptions by demonstrating your own strength and displacing theirs”. A female entrepreneur of supply chain business (C5) who is involved in production business shared her experience of communicating with vendors and suppliers. She stated “Also communication play very important although there have been some difficulties in the past when communicating with local vendors and suppliers, people are now more accepting women in the business sector, in the past have less contact with suppliers and vendors because my brother handles all local dealing but now we are welcomed and I personally deal with them”.

**Networking:** Almost all the participants consider networking as an important category for women entrepreneurship of supply chain businesses. One participant (C8) consider networking important to get investment. She stated “Networking is very efficient and very important not just female entrepreneur of supply chain businesses but to everyone I would say. If you have good networks it would be easy to get investment distributors and customers for entrepreneurs”. Other participant (C7) regard networking as an important tool “To start any business you have to build your network as well because if people are aware of your start-up they will give your reference and spread about your product. At the end you get more business and profit. So for the both men and women networking has prominent role”. Another participant (C4) shared her experience “Networking is so important for our business. It's like word of mouth people spread through one person to another person. We get new clients through this process. In my business we get reference based customers so it can only achieved through networking”.

**Managerial Skills:** Respondents reported that women entrepreneur of supply chain businesses needed managerial skills to run their business. One participant (C2) stated “As a female we had to have proper management skills we need to manage home as well as business and also look after family”. One more participant (C8) stated “Women are born with skills such as management skills they can manage home as well as businesses. Just because entrepreneur is a trait that can be find in anyone so anyone can be an entrepreneur”.

**Time Management:** Besides other skills time management also referred as one of the major issue for women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses to balance work and family life. Many respondents shared their experience how they manage time with their family and work on their business. Two participant (C1 and C2) told us about how they divide time and manage their work life easily “I make it balance by dividing my time. I've time schedule for my work that I need to finish my work in designated time and while doing work I don't concentrate on any other thing just to balance my life. When I am home I am home I don't look at my business at that time” “First of all I think you've to divide load and manage time how many things you can do in your allotted time”. Other participants reported how they were facing difficulties in managing time at the initial stage of their business. Participants (C3) stated “Initial stage I gave all my time to my work so my other things were disturbed but then with all things get smoothly done. Time managed everything and is really important. Another respondent (C8) stated that it's fairly easy to manage time in own business in comparison to job based person. She stated “I think in entrepreneurship it easy to balance work life in comparison to job. It's fairly easy because you are your own boss you can manage time easily for your every activity”.

**Soft Skills:** This category was recognized by many respondents. They consider patience, consistency, focused all very important for entrepreneurial success. Following statement of respondents are stated in support:

(C9): “*Stay focused is the key because when you started a business you've already spent so much money and time in that so for the*

*tough time it's better to wait rather losing hope”.*

(C3): *“In the start I was getting less orders but I stayed consistent and work patiently. Took help from my immediate friends to get through tough times easily”.*

(C4): *“There is a mind-set that women can't work they are born just to raise their family and look after home but after sometime it was all fine because I stay consistent and my passion to achieve something in life keeps me motivated”.*

(C6): *“I think patience is the key if you believe you loss and leave everything behind then your business can't flourish. Good and bad times comes in every business, ups and down also comes but you have to be consistence and stay focused on your goal to get future success”.*

#### **4.6. Well-being and Work Life Balance**

This theme comprised of two categories that is mental well-being and physical well-being. In this section the importance of both the categories reported by our participants and how they affect the life of a women in business.

**Mental Well-being:** Women in our encounters struggle to find a work-life balance since they have a lot of domestic duties. They have to take care of their children and other family obligations, as we have addressed in the literature. Additionally, our respondents mentioned the relevant outcomes their mental well-being is affected due to constant pressure at home. Respondent (C7) stated “Yes, it has an impact on family life at the start when you have to focus on the business. Relationships are difficult, but the other person has to know that you're not really a joke and neither is your work. You must therefore adjust it carefully”. Other participants (C2 and C4) told us about important of mental health “If we are fit then we can achieve anything. Pressure we shouldn't take on our self this is not good for our mental health” “I did time management and now my time is divided between my family, work and my social activities because to be healthy and fit your mental health is very important. Mental health can only be fine through taking out time for oneself”. So we found out that mental health is regarded highly important for entrepreneurial success.

**Physical Well-being:** It is also very important for women entrepreneurship as many respondents shared their experience how a person should be physically fit first then they can continue achieving life goals. Participant (C11) stated “first of all I think you've to stay fit and manage time how many things you can do in your allotted time do not take pressure on yourself and your body it is very important to look at our physical wellbeing. If we are fit then we can achieve anything”.

According to our findings, marital status has an impact on establishing a work-life balance. 6 respondents in our given dataset were single, and five of them said they were unable to detect this problem in the early phases of their businesses and are still avoiding it. They claim that because they don't have as many family-related tasks as others who are married, being single allows individuals to focus more on their business. Participant (C6) she is married and shared her experience “Being a female business woman it is very important to balance work life because my family is my first priority. When I started my family life was disturbed as I've three children and initially, I wasn't able to give them much time at first because I was fighting to keep my business afloat. However, I finally manage to strike a work / life balance”.

#### **4.7. Dynamic Environments**

The theme comprised of three categories that is changing trends, digital media revolution and modern marketing practices. The importance of all these categories in these dynamic environment reported by our participants and how they are utilizing all of this to enhance their entrepreneurial success.

**Changing Trends:** We have seen vast changing environment in this past decade how things are being used now is totally changed. All these changes are shared by our respondents. They are experiencing the changing environment and it actually benefiting them. Participant (C1) stated “As I said after the covid mostly businesses are running through social media even the much bigger brands are very much active on social accounts because they know this is tough time to compete in this digital era. Many small start-up are in the market and they get hype through influencer and their social media marketing strategy so big brands have to compete with them to boost up their sales and likewise it benefitted me a lot”. Another participant (C3) shared her opinion “I think social media is the best option it can help women entrepreneurs. From social media they can make pages, be an influencer and there are so many options available so in my opinion many women can take help from it”. Other participant (C8) talked about emerging trend regarding feminism she stated “Social media has a major role to play in businesses as you know trends are talking about feminism so its high time female entrepreneurs come up forward and know their importance. All this can only done through social media help”.

**Digital Media Revolution:** Digital media is everywhere without the digital media businesses can't survive these days. All of our respondents totally declared that digital media is running businesses nowadays. They shared their opinions on digital media revolution.

(C6): “No one can deny importance of social media. On your own level if you can reach for example 10 people then by the help of social media your reach can be higher 100 and 1000 of people just with good digital marketing strategy”.

(C1): “As in when covid struck mostly businesses were running on the social media now after covid people are used to that thing every other person is going for only shopping as its hassle free and time efficient”.

(C2): “Social media can help any business. How it works? By liking any page doesn't cost you any anything. You can put such content on your page that your audience should like that and connect with you. Within seconds through social media your reach is with your uncountable potential customers. Social media gives you reminder and leave imprints on persons mind”.

(C5): “Especially after covid trends are changed people first see reviews and comments on social media then after that they take your service so good social media presence is very important for any business”.

**Modern Marketing Practices:** Utilizing all of a company's resources to give customers the greatest possible experience is modern marketing. In recent changing times there is huge difference in marketing practices as experienced by our participants. They shared their ideas and opinions about modern marketing practices. Participant (C7) shared her experience “A lot of brands are already there a lot of products are already there why customer should buy your product that's the thing. For that we have to give the customer good quality product then after sometime we manage to build trust with our customers. Marketing is so much important. We can run our campaign through digital marketing over different platforms for example Facebook, Instagram. It is really helpful for your business to grow. It has become a basic need nowadays for any kind of business”. Another participant (C3) shared her marketing

practice that she is doing “Social media benefited we are up to date now on our social media handles. We give promotion and deals on our pages it reach out to our customer and they avail deals so digital world always gives us benefits”.

#### **4.8. Utility of Social Media**

In this section participants discussed the importance of difference social media platform which they are using for their business. Participant (C2) shared her opinion she stated “There are so many platforms for women if you are interested in beauty you can make up your videos and post it on YouTube and star earning with it, for digital skills there is Fiverr which gives platform for many women who are good in digital media they can start freelancing. These options are for those women who can't manage to go out and earn. There are many opportunities for women of supply chain businesses in Pakistan but they have to look into it”. Other respondent (C3) shared how social media helped her to enhance business. She stated “I got so most of my orders through social media and I think in my business I am getting much hype through digital platform like Instagram, WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, Snapchat and Fiverr freelancing website etc. rather than face to face communication”.

#### **4.9. Entrepreneurial Support and Education**

In this section two themes emerges that is social awareness and entrepreneurial know-how (education). This concept plays important in reflecting women entrepreneurial success.

**Social Awareness:** Women need to get awareness about the importance of entrepreneurship. They should get platforms to support and get awareness about the entrepreneurship importance. Many respondents emphasize to get social awareness regarding the topic. Participant (C4) stated “We need to spread awareness through social media about the benefits of women in business”. Other participant (C6) stated “I think the first thing that needed and it's already in the trend that is to provide women platforms for entrepreneurial importance. Like there are events for women to showcase talent and share their journey. Also bloggers support women very much. These things are already working but just need to enhance and increase the effort more”. Another participant (C11) shared about the importance of entrepreneurship “Arrange training sessions and create awareness on forums for entrepreneurial mind-set. We can also spread awareness on digital media about entrepreneurship so people get to know the importance of entrepreneurship otherwise they will stuck in their jobs whole life”.

**Entrepreneurial Education:** Entrepreneurial education is necessary to run any business. Respondents shared the importance of right entrepreneurial education for women of supply chain businesses for their ventures. Participant (C3) emphasize on entrepreneurial education. She stated “I think we should change our educational system like in our curriculum we need to redone it. Students should get proper guidance at the initial stage about their career choices and what they want to do with their life in future. Also there should be entrepreneurial studies related courses in our curriculum which can provide great benefits for business start-ups. We have less options for our students to get exposure there should be skill based learning and we should adopt things from developed nations how they are setting up their student curriculum”. Another participant (C5) shared that entrepreneurial education also social media education is important. She stated “There should be places, forums or institute where women can get entrepreneurial education easily because education and entrepreneurial education is two different things. Pakistani women should get more chances for their career progress. Also social media education also necessary women should get the platform where they can learn how they can start and boost their business through social media in this digital era”.

#### **4.10. E-Commerce**

respondents shared their ideas of home based start-ups also they tell us about the importance of women to come up with their creative ideas and skills. Following statements are stated in support of women E-commerce businesses.

(C2): “Women should come up with creative ideas like for example they can do home-based start-up like cooking, arts, beauty, digital and lifestyle skills etc because mostly women have extra ordinary skills. See this is the tough time now women can easily work from their home without any hassle. They can come up with their own idea which give them pleasure and earning too”.

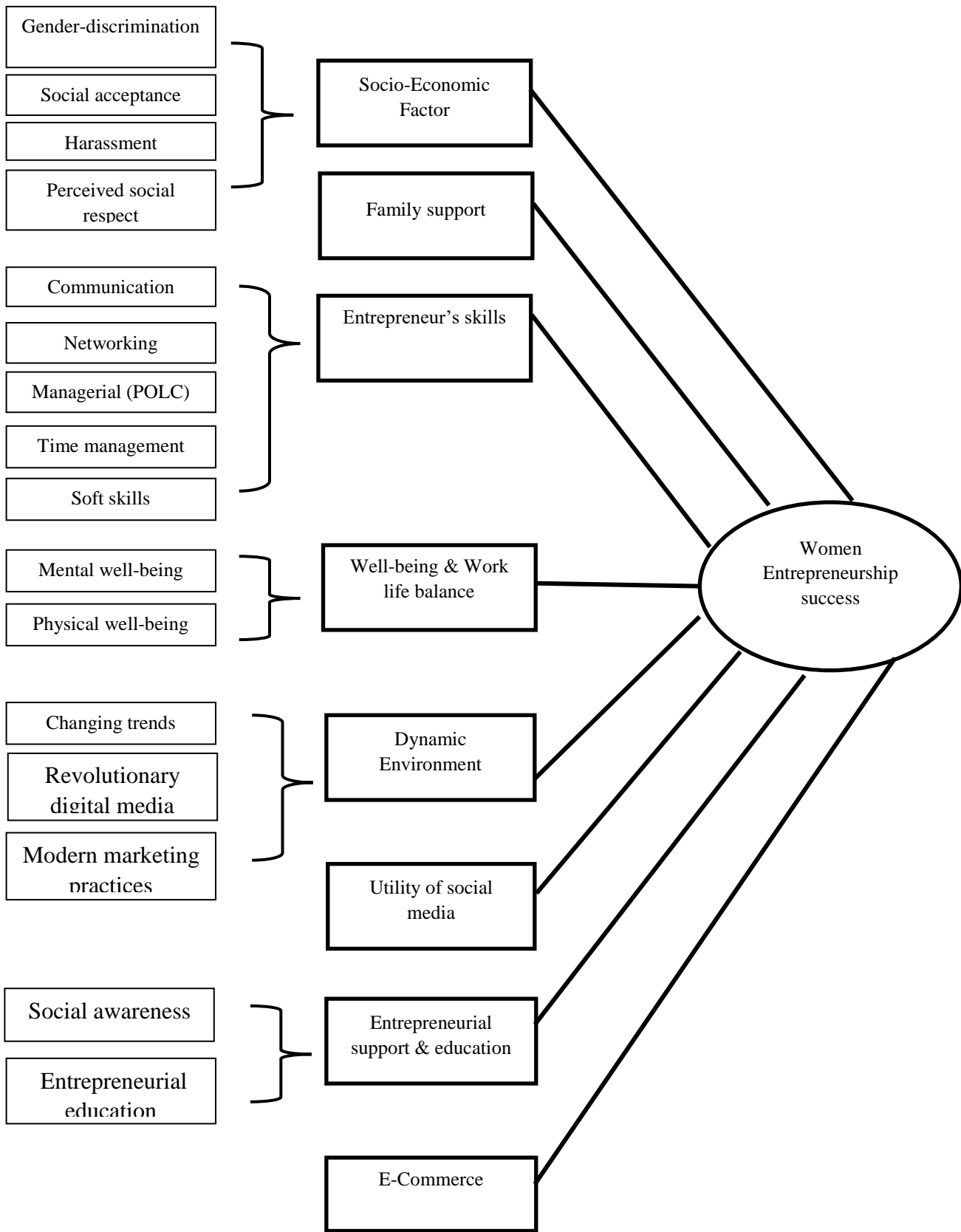
(C8): “Social media can appreciate and highlight small home based businesses and boost up their work it'll make other female also to come forward and start doing something for them and their society well-being. It's a very easy and cheap platform you don't have to spend more money it's your free promotion I would say”.

#### **4.11. Conceptual Framework**

All factors have direct effect on women entrepreneurship of supply chain businesses' success. If we see them as challenge the more positivity put into the factor it will turn the challenge into opportunity. Challenges have direct impact on opportunity. Like we take family support as an example factor it's a challenge for women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses' success but if we get positive family support it will become opportunity for all the women entrepreneur of supply chain businesses. Same goes for all the other factors like wise. All positive efforts may lead them to women entrepreneurship success.

### **5. Discussion**

By examining perceptions of women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses operating businesses in Pakistan, the study attempted to discover factors contributing to the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses in Pakistan. This study adopted a qualitative methodology, and thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data. The findings are categorized into eight major themes that contribute to women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses success including Socio-Economic Factor, Family support, Entrepreneur's skills, Well-being & Work life balance, Dynamic Environment, Utility of social media, Entrepreneurial support & education and E-Commerce. The present study shows the challenges and opportunities for women entrepreneurship is multi-dimensional and they are related all these factors.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



## 6. Conclusion

In light of the findings, we suggested that although there are still certain obstacles that Pakistani women must overcome although they have been reduced with time. There are eight distinct themes that have arisen; some of these ideas are novel, and we were unable to locate any literature that addressed them.

In Pakistan, barriers to women's advancement such as socioeconomic status and family support were identified during analysis. However, as time has passed, people now are more accepting than they were a few years ago. They also struggle with being accepted by society. Social norms have evolved, and today people encourage women to launch new businesses and become significant forces in Pakistan's economic system. The improvement of Pakistan's educational system can contribute to dispelling the misconception that women are only responsible for domestic duties. Education is a key factor in changing societal mind-sets. In the last current dynamic environment has a significant impact on the success of women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses.

### 6.1. Limitations

Despite the many advantages of the in-depth analysis provided by this study, there are several limitations as well that should indeed be taken into account for this research. The most significant drawback of this study is that just twelve respondents were used because qualitative research takes a lot of time, making it impossible to generalise the findings. Since 80% of the interviews took place over the phone, we were unable to see the interviewees' body language. The snowball sampling technique has its own drawbacks; in this, individuals with nearly identical characteristics are mentioned. Because of this, not a single respondent in this study claimed that government efforts to support female entrepreneurs in Pakistan may have been the result of snowball sampling. Also, participants in the present research were female; a male perspective on women entrepreneurship was not included.

### 6.2. Managerial Implications

The results of this study can be used by numerous organisations to create learning & growth materials, improving the lives of female entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses. Additionally, the study helps managers and entrepreneurs understand the crucial function network resource acquisition plays in facilitating corporate performance. The study also reveals that in institutionally difficult environments like Pakistan, large efforts are required to foster business networking relationships in order to realise the benefits of firm performance. Therefore, if women entrepreneurs wish to reap more fulfilling and satisfying rewards from their entrepreneurial activities, they should strengthen their external network links (for instance, by registering with and joining pertinent industry and trade organisations, legalising their operations). Finally, governments and development organisations in resource-limited nations should support training and education agendas to assist women entrepreneurs in understanding how to create higher levels of market name and strengthen external network ties necessary for company's success.

### 6.3. Future Directions

Due to time limitation, we were only capable of conducting twelve interviews; thus the, the sample size needs to be increased. It should also come from different cities in Pakistan, as there could be regional differences in the circumstances that are being studied, although this research attempted to capture all elements of the context. By using the research study as a foundation and building it in quantitative research, there are many opportunities for expanding the research. There is a strong study direction to look at the entrepreneurship potential for transgender people in Pakistan because they are now engaging in such business ventures and shifting their traditional profession.

There is also room to do in-depth study on the socioeconomic difficulties and problems with work-life balance that women entrepreneurs in Pakistan face. As a result, it opens the door for in-depth study that can help women entrepreneurship of supply chain businesses grow.

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## Annexures

### Annexure – A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Question No 1: What Does Entrepreneurship Mean to You?

- a) How would you describe a Female entrepreneur?
- b) What do you think about women entrepreneur of supply chain businesses in Pakistan?

Question No 2: What are the issues and challenges faced by you during your business start start-up stage while living in Pakistan?

- a) What were your initial steps for your business?
- b) How did you persist through the tough times?
- c) Being an entrepreneur, tell us about your work-life balance?

Question No 3: What do you think must be done to enhance women entrepreneurship of supply chain businesses in Pakistan?

- a) Why is networking important for women entrepreneurs of supply chain businesses?
- b) In your opinion, how social media can help women entrepreneurship of supply chain businesses?
- c) Does social media benefited you in your business?/

### Annexure – B: Request for Participation (Consent)

As a community leader, you're being welcomed to take an interest in a study that will attempt to identify and portray the encounters of Women in entrepreneurship role of supply chain businesses .Frequently fascinating women's tales are overlooked, or the focus is on challenges to effective entrepreneurship.. The objective of this study is to tell the stories of female pioneers within the light of positive experiences and successes.

Participation in this study will require connect that will not surpass two hour of your time. Your reactions will be kept secret and your title will not be said in the study. By taking part, you may have the satisfaction of contributing to a study focused on entrepreneurship journeys.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

The interview lasted 20 to 30 minutes. For qualitative data analysis, the interviews were recorded captured and transcribed, with respondent personal info deleted before coding. All of the interviews did take place in a relaxed setting and were conducted in English language.

### Annexure – C: Consent Form

Dear Participant:

You have been welcomed to take part in a investigate think about that will attempt to get it and portray the encounters of females in entrepreneur roles of Supply chain businesses.

**Project:** Challenges and Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs of supply Chain Businesses in Pakistan.

**Purpose of the Project:** This research will tell the stories of women who are in entrepreneurship roles of supply chain businesses inside the community.

**Procedures:** You will be asked give participation in an interview that will not take more than two hour of your precious time. The interview will also be audio-taped and take place at a location decided mutually by participant and researchers.

**Dangers and/or Distresses:** There are no known dangers or inconveniences related with this research.

**Benefits:** You may have the fulfillment of contributing to a study centered on Women Entrepreneurship of supply chain businesses.

**Confidentiality:** Your title will not be utilized within inquire about ponder. All audiotapes will be kept in a bolted area. Once the questioner has translated the tapes, they will moreover be kept in a secured area as well.

**Opportunity to Ask Questions:** You have freedom to ask questions about the research study and your questions will be answered at the time of research.

**Freedom to withdraw:** You can withdraw at any time you have that freedom in your hand.

You're voluntarily making a choice to take part in this think about. Your signature certifies merely have decided to take an interest having studied and caught on the data displayed. You'll be given a duplicate of this assent shape to keep.

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Signature of Participant

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Date

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Signature of Researcher

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Date

**Annexure – D: Profile Analysis**

Case No	Age	Children	Education	Experience
C1	20-39	2	Graduate	8 years
C2	20-39	1	Postgraduate	5 years
C3	Less than 20	0	Higher Secondary	2 years
C4	20-39	1	Intermediate	5 years
C5	20-39	0	Graduate	3 years
C6	40-49	3	Intermediate	3 years
C7	20-39	1	Graduate	5 years
C8	20-39	0	Postgraduate	4 years
C9	20-39	1	Intermediate	3 years
C10	40-49	2	Graduate	7 years
C11	20-39	1	Graduate	4 years
C12	20-39	0	Postgraduate	5 years