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Family influence on women entrepreneurs in Pakistan



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Abstract

This qualitative study explores factors within families that influence women entrepreneurs of Pakistan. Pakistan is chosen as the key research area as where the corporate environment as well as the domestic sphere, they belong to, represent the intricate interaction of social, cultural, traditional, and religious components, especially considering the characteristics of the existing patriarchal system. For the purpose of examining the influence of family on women entrepreneurship, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted. They have different marital status (married, single and/or divorced), however, the commonality that is essential for the purpose of the current paper is that all of the participants are residing with their families. Through the analysis of found empirical material and previous literature on the topic it has been concluded that gender stereotypes, family rules, regulations, conventions, as well as cultural and/or societal values may influence how entrepreneurial decisions are made within the family. These influences have been structured to five groups of factors: gender assigned roles, financial and educational background of the family, children, spouse and his family, as well as the family of origin. The factors have various influences and while some families may modify their standard of life to fit cultural trends, other families may choose to adopt (within societal patterns) what best suits them. In other words, it can be said that family has, indeed, a strong influence on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan, both in positive and negative ways.

Key words

Women entrepreneurship, gender, family, Pakistan, entrepreneurship.



Acknowledgments

“There is something irreversible about acquiring knowledge; and the simulation of the search for it differs in a most profound way from the reality”

- J. Robert Oppenheimer

Life's obstructions frequently stand in the way of us attaining our goals, but the fortunate ones, of which we are, never travel that journey alone.

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Glossary

Entrepreneurship: A process of creating and sustaining economic and/or social value through the development and implementation of creative and innovative strategies and solutions that require the identification of opportunity that results from economic (dis)equilibrium, risk-taking and mitigation, and resource allocation and mobilization (Mars and Rios-Aguilar, 2010).

Women entrepreneur(s): A woman or a group of women who initiate, organize and run a business concern (Aradhya, 2022).

Gender: Socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people (Boerner, et al., 2018).

Family: A group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household and interacting with each other in their respective social positions (Treuthart, 1990).

“Breadwinner”: A gender role, which involves doing manual/outside labor, usually assigned to men (Almy and Sanatullova-Allison, 2016).

“Homemaker”: A gender role, which involves taking care of home, children and family, usually assigned to women (Almy and Sanatullova-Allison, 2016).

Mumpreneur: An individual that takes advantage of business opportunities in a geographical and social space that allows them to combine the roles of business ownership and motherhood (Makola, 2022).



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1 Introduction

This section of the paper starts with a background consisting of a generalized view of entrepreneurship in relation to gender. It is further structured from generalized to specific information on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan. Furthermore, the introduction consists of problem discussion and the purpose of this study.

Background

*“The most effective way to manage change successfully is to create it”,
Peter F. Drucker (2002).*

Entrepreneurship truly demonstrates this genesis of creation. Mars and Rios-Aguilar (2010, p. 445) defines entrepreneurship as “[...]a process of creating and sustaining economic and/or social value through the development and implementation of creative and innovative strategies and solutions that require the identification of opportunity that results from economic (dis)equilibrium, risk-taking and mitigation, and resource allocation and mobilization” .

When the economy is strong, there is less of a need to support innovative, entrepreneurial businesses (Richter, et al., 2017). Why take a chance on something novel and unproven when people and businesses are succeeding? Entrepreneurs frequently take on existing businesses, and while this may seem unfavourable, uncontested, established businesses have a tendency to feel proud and pleased to enjoy their revenues without investing in R&D to grow their business (Powell and Sandholtz, 2012). When imports, for instance enter, these static businesses initially suffer, quickly deteriorate and are unable to compete (Grossman, 1989). Thus, one thing that makes entrepreneurship significant is that it pushes monopolies to perform better while the economy is booming.



It seems essential to highlight the importance of entrepreneurship in the domestic economy, especially when the overall financial situation is unwell. Active entrepreneurial processes are able to contribute to solving such issues as a significant level of unemployment and stagnation of the economy (Scherer and Palazzo, 2012). By opening and successfully running new companies, entrepreneurs are creating needed competition on the market, which stimulates the production of goods and services of better quality, form new job positions and, as a result, decrease unemployment (Gordon, et al., 2009). In other words, entrepreneurship can truly be compared with the oxygen that not only provides the economy with a chance to breathe (perform at a lowest level), but to experience life to its fullest (grow and nourish).

As the economic stage changes, so does entrepreneurship and its development (Acs, 2008). A few decades ago hearing the word "entrepreneur", a person could imagine a middle-aged man with a briefcase in his hands. However, at the current moment, the idea of an entrepreneur is more diverse, because a significant number of business owners are women (Acs, 2008).

In this modern era, the creativity and potential to multitask has been exhibited by women tremendously. Women business owners start, plan, manage, and run their small to medium-sized firms effectively (Bushell, 2008). When a woman owns her own business, she has more flexibility to put her imaginative thoughts into action (Bushell, 2008). Entrepreneurship is a way for women from lower socio-economic groups and those without extensive professional backgrounds to make money and support their families. The difficulty, however, comes from getting over the finish line, getting beyond obstacles, and realizing one's own potential and identity. Today's environment is more favorable, and the timing is ideal (Bushell, 2008).



Problem discussion

It was in the 1980s when the field of research saw the emergence of women entrepreneurship (Goffe and Scace, 1985; Hisrich and Brush, 1986), and since then, it has intensely captured the curiosity of scholars and policymakers everywhere (Achtenhagen and Tillmar, 2013). Women business owners have dramatically increased over time, particularly in emerging economies (De Bruin, Brush and Welter, 2006). In addition to experiencing economic transformation over the years, emerging markets and economies also offer tremendous growth potential (Mensah, et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, there are a variety of limitations imposed by the macro and micro environments, as well as by family and society, particularly for women entrepreneurs (Achtenhagen and Tillmar, 2013). In addition to serving a "nomic" purpose and giving women a sense of belonging, marriage plays a vital role in their lives, requiring the woman to simultaneously take care of both the home and family (Berger and Kellner, 1964; Curran, et al., 2010; Dewitt, et al., 2022). In certain civilisations and communities, this component is much more prominent (Jafari-Sadeghi, 2021). Even though they make up a more significant proportion of the corporate population globally than men, women still start fewer businesses than men (Neergaard and Thrane, 2011). Furthermore, studies that have long examined the issue of women entrepreneurship have found that women often face difficulties when they enter the business world (Neergaard and Thrane, 2011) and family is one of the numerous variables that has been shown to have a significant influence on women in business (Kovalainen and Arenius, 2006).

Aside from that, women have traditionally been tasked with what is regarded as the personal sphere of existence (Alsos, Jensen and Ljunggren, 2010), which draws our attention towards the stereotyped mindsets which predominantly support the idea that women and men have been positioned and branded in accordance with various predefined roles in certain civilisations (Nowak and Wyleżałek, 2019). Due to the long-standing custom



of designating duties for each sex, this psyche has penetrated families and has led to the development of distinct and gender-specific responsibilities. As a result, where women have traditionally been considered as “homemakers”, men have traditionally been entrusted with the obligation of working, i.e. being “breadwinner” (Treas, Van Der Lippe and Tai, 2011).

There may be a number of reasons why it is problematic that stereotypes and expectations restrict women from starting their own businesses. One of the reasons might be that it may discourage women from pursuing essential professional prospects. Moreover, women may run the danger of running across a range of professional obstacles, such as prejudice inside various organizations, which entrepreneurship might have helped them to overcome (Kovalainen and Arenius, 2006).

Academic literature views the family as one of the crucial factors affecting women entrepreneurship from various perspectives. Firstly, it has been mentioned multiple times in the previous research in the field that family might play a role of a significant motivator when it comes to women entrepreneurship (Cantú Cavada, Bobek and Maček, 2017; McGowan, et al., 2012; Rønsen, 2012). The exploratory study conducted by McGowan, et al. (2012) has revealed that some women achieve a better work-life balance in establishing their own enterprises.

The reason for that lies in the fact that for those women who have not only a husband, but children as well, a regular 9-5 job might not be the best option, as this type of job demands constant presence at work during the day time, which might be an obstacle in the way of raising kids. Moreover, self-employment opens up the opportunity for flexible hours, which presents “the ability to accommodate professional goals alongside personal responsibilities” (McGowan, et al., 2012, p. 55). Besides that, family is believed to be a great source of inspiration and support for women entrepreneurs (Cantú Cavada, Bobek and Maček, 2017). The study on the analysis of motivational aspects of women entrepreneurship (Cantú Cavada,



Bobek and Maček, 2017) has discovered that more than half of the participants have stated that their family members not only positively received entrepreneurial aspirations of their wife/daughter but also provided some additional help, such as mentoring and collaboration.

However, despite the fact that there are many motivational aspects, it is fair to notice that family might be considered an obstacle on the way of starting a business for women as well. Recent research (Cantú Cavada, Bobek and Maček, 2017) has highlighted that women may prioritize being a mother for their children over being an entrepreneur. In addition to this, in certain situations, the necessity of taking care of elderly people (for instance, parents or parents-in-law) might also occur, which leads to the fact that the home becomes their first concern. Another aspect that needs to be borne in mind is the understanding of roles and responsibilities that husband and wife are usually expected to play according to social foundations (McGowan, et al., 2012). In some cultures, the position of the “breadwinner” is strongly associated with the husband’s obligation and the fact that a woman might also earn money (especially from establishing and running her own business) might not look appealing both to family members and society.

Having considered the background of this study, one may ponder over the question of the influence of family on women entrepreneurship. What seems to be even interesting is the discussion of that influence in a more specific context, which in this paper is Pakistan.

Pakistani context

According to Raza and Murad (2010), Pakistani women come across particular limitations with respect to their ability to move up the socio-economic ladder owing to cultural standards. As a result, women's labor force participation rates have never come close to matching those of males and the participation of women in the workforce has, nevertheless, increased somewhat. Similar findings are reported in Pakistani research by



Shakir and Noorani (2014), which details undesirable consequences for women entrepreneurs who are expected to manage considerable duties in both their home and professional life. They work greater hours each day in both sectors in order to fulfill their responsibilities. They experience a range of negative side effects as a result of their stress from juggling two responsibilities, including a decline in well-being, an increase in stress and tension, poor physical and mental health, emotional disturbance, a lack of time for exercise, an increase in unease and demoralization, inadequate eating, and exhaustion.

Despite this, women have devised a number of ways to convince their spouses and/or parents, hiring help if they have children and carefully balancing work and family duties (Chinchilla, et al., 2006; Gianakos, 2001). Moreover, research has also pointed out that in nations with strong family connections such as Pakistan, families are typically built on a traditional division of labor, with men being entitled as providers and women as “homemakers” (Sohail, et al., 2022).

As has been implied by many previously mentioned authors, another aspect that seems to be a crucial part of the relationship between women entrepreneurship and family in Pakistan is the structure of the family. The majority of the academic literature on the topic focuses mainly on the role of the husband and the presence (or, vice versa, absence) of the children in the household (Cantú Cavada, Bobek and Maček, 2017; McGowan, et al., 2012). Nonetheless, there are also researches that extend the organization of the family and consider the influence of other members as well. For instance, Yunis, Hashim and Anderson (2019) conducted research, which found that about 20% of the respondents were influenced by their parents and siblings. The respondents stated that their fathers were originally against the entrepreneurial ambitions of their daughters due to their cultural values and it was other women of the family (i.e. mothers and sisters) that supported future entrepreneurs (Yunis, Hashim and Anderson, 2019). These findings



prove that the structure of the family is especially important when it comes to women entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

Additionally, the effect of the family on women's entrepreneurship has been studied in several places of the world (Hughes, 2003). Based on discussions with a number of Pakistani women entrepreneurs, further study claims that families play a significant influence in entrepreneurship (Sohail, et al., 2022).

Pakistan is chosen because past research has demonstrated that Pakistani women entrepreneurs have several difficulties managing their enterprises (Elahi and Malik, 2021). In Pakistan, economic growth of women is hindered by dominant, strong masculine ideologies, not merely through constraints and obligations, but also through investments and maintenance (Dyer and Handler, 1994; Ram and Holliday, 1993; Sohail, et al., 2022).

Existing literature focuses on the general challenges and motivational aspects for the women entrepreneurs, yet does not provide full answers to questions in the mind of academic society. This happens as the previous authors have made a try to “draw a clear line” between what falls under motivations and what is to be considered as a challenge for women entrepreneurs. However, such an approach might not be the most appropriate one: family is an extremely complicated structure, the elements of which are highly dependent on each other.

Accordingly, it is rather difficult to say that a certain aspect (for example, presence of children) has an exclusively positive or exclusively negative influence. Such a mindset leads to the exclusion of a significant number of necessary elements from the equation of the family, and, accordingly, knowledge valuable for literature on this topic is subjected to the possibility of loss. The authors of the current paper set a goal of studying, deeply, the influence of various family-related aspects on women entrepreneurship through examining existing literature, as well as gathering and analyzing empirical evidence to create connections.



Besides that, the amount of existing literature on the topic is rather limited; there has not been much research on the connection between family and women entrepreneurship in the context of Pakistan. This leads to the emergence of a research gap in the academic knowledge of the influence of the former on the latter, which can be considered as the relevance of the current paper. Therefore, the study will revolve around the following research question:

How do the family-related aspects influence women entrepreneurship in Pakistan?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the current study is to make a general contribution to gender and entrepreneurship studies. This is to be done by investigating the family-related factors that influence women entrepreneurship in Pakistan through the analysis of existing literature together with gathered empirical evidence. Moreover, by presenting the personal experiences of women entrepreneurs of Pakistan, this paper raises up their voices and shares their stories in order to both make them visible to the world and contribute to academia.

2 Literature review

This section of the paper begins with the existing literature proposing various definitions of entrepreneurship together with motivations associated with entrepreneurial decisions. Following this, the difference between societal concept of gender versus biological sex is discussed. Moreover, a generalized discussion on entrepreneurship is specified to the context of Pakistan to further elaborate gender roles and equality in the country. Gender roles are explored and evaluated in the light of family as an institution and the related themes. Literature review concludes with the perspectives of previous authors on the topic of the relationship between family and women entrepreneurship in Pakistan.



2.1 Entrepreneurship

2.1.1 Defining entrepreneurship

An individual's abilities as an entrepreneur are crucial in the study of entrepreneurship since launching a new business is mostly a personal decision. According to Littunen (2000), in addition to being partially the result of experience, the entrepreneur's motivation is also likely influenced by his or her training and the resources that are under their control. It is one of the elements that contributes to the entrepreneur's values and vision. It may alternatively be viewed as the elements bringing the entrepreneur closer to or making these aspirations vanish from life.

According to Casson (1982) cited by Littunen (2000, p. 295), the traits that make up an entrepreneur are “[...] the ability to take risks, innovativeness, knowledge of how the market functions, manufacturing know-how, marketing skills, business management skills, and the ability to cooperate”. In other words, it can be said that Entrepreneurs are those who are willing to take risks, have the capacity to spot business possibilities, are able to rectify mistakes, and can seize profitable prospects.

In order to understand the personality characteristics of an entrepreneur, it needs to be considered that a person's entrepreneurial spirit is influenced by their surroundings and themselves. The individual's living environment, experiences, and changes all play a major part in this process (Rotter, 1990). As a result, it may be claimed that starting a business can result in a substantial enough life shift to have an influence on the characteristics of an individual.

When researching entrepreneurial characteristics, “need to achieve” theory and “locus of control” theory cannot be disregarded. According to the theory proposed by McClelland (1961), people with a high need to succeed are among those who anticipate solving issues on their own, create goals, and work hard to accomplish these goals. Additionally, people with a strong drive



for success frequently choose to become entrepreneurs and do so more successfully than others. Whereas according to Rotter (1966), an individual's locus of control might be observed internally or externally. Having control over one's own life is referred to as having internal control standards, where one's actions are thought to have an impact on either one's personality or behaviour. While, a notion of external control is one that places emphasis on coincidence, destiny, good fortune, or other people's behaviour.

Moreover, internal locus of control is associated with acquiring knowledge, which inspires and encourages engagement in making efforts. On the other hand, the external expectation limits development and promotes inactivity. Entrepreneurial traits are typically related with an internal control of expectation (Littunen, 2000).

2.1.2 Motivation and entrepreneurship

Many people prefer being an entrepreneur over being an employee who works for someone else because it gives a personal challenge. An entrepreneur is a self-employed person who establishes, plans, manages, and takes responsibility for his own business (Segal, et al., 2005).

In exchange for taking on the associated personal financial risks, company owners immediately gain from the enterprise's future potential. According to Campbell (1992), being an entrepreneur is sometimes seen as a risky career option since it involves dealing with conditions in one's daily life and at work that is more unclear, difficult, and frustrating due to the process of starting a new business.

The literature on entrepreneurship and motivation has developed in a way that is comparable to the development of the discipline of organizational psychology (Segal, et al., 2005). According to a paradigm proposed by Campbell, et al. (1970), theories of motivation have advanced from “[...] static, content-oriented theories to dynamic, process-oriented theories” from the standpoint of organizational psychology. Theories of content look for



particular traits in people who commence, guide, maintain, and discontinue an activity. Whereas, Process theories describe how behaviour is initiated, controlled, upheld, and ended (Segal, et al., 2005).

Many studies have focused on the traits of entrepreneurs, starting with McClelland (1961), who contended that a strong need for achievement was a personality trait shared by them (Churchill and Lewis, 1986; Shaver and Scott, 1992).

Moreover, the "push" hypothesis and the "pull" theory, which Gilad and Levine (1986) suggested as two mutually reinforcing theories of entrepreneurial drive. According to the "push" idea, people are propelled towards starting their own business by unfavorable external factors including unhappiness with their current jobs, trouble obtaining employment, a low wage, or rigid work schedules. According to the "pull" idea, people are drawn to entrepreneurship because it may lead to independence, self-fulfillment, prosperity, and other desired results.

According to research (Keeble, Bryson and Wood, 1992; Orhan and Scott, 2001), people become entrepreneurs more often as a result of "pull" forces than "push" reasons. In addition, research on entrepreneurship has sought to pinpoint the contextual and environmental elements, such as job loss, prior employment history, the accessibility of different resources, and political pressures, that might predict entrepreneurial behavior. Although contextual factors have been empirically studied, Krueger, et al. (2000) found that these studies' contextual predictability and explanatory power were both weak.

In recent years, many process-oriented cognitive models of entrepreneurship have been developed. These models concentrate on attitudes and beliefs and how they might predict intents and behaviors. People's cognitive processes are what lead to human pursuits, especially complicated ones like starting new businesses. Humans are capable of considering potential future possibilities, determining which of them is most desired, and determining



whether it is practical to pursue achieving these results. It is unreasonable to expect individuals to seek objectives that they believe to be unpleasant or impractical (Segal, et al., 2005).

The fundamental idea behind current process models is that an individual's aspirations to become an entrepreneur may be anticipated by answering the following two questions: (1) Is entrepreneurship attractive to me? (i.e., does it provide the intended results?) and (2) Am I capable of starting my own business? Do I possess the necessary qualities to be a successful entrepreneur? (Vroom, 1964 cited by Segal, et al., 2005, p. 45).

2.2 Gender theories

2.2.1 The definitions of gender and sex

Before the further discussion of the relation between gender and entrepreneurship, which is an essential part of the current paper, begins, it seems rather important to discuss such fundamental concepts as “gender” and “sex”. Gender and sex are often considered to be the same as these seem to be clear-cut, uncomplicated descriptions of some of the most elementary human traits. On a daily basis, these words are frequently used without much emphasis on differences, but more as synonyms (Schudson, Beischel and van Anders, 2019). Yet there is a groundbreaking variance that has to be considered in the current paper, as it focuses on gender and entrepreneurship studies.

The concept of "sex" refers to biological traits, including chromosomes, exterior and internal sex organs, as well as bodily hormonal processes (Pryzgoda and Chrisler, 2000; Schudson, Beischel and van Anders, 2019; Torgrimson and Minson, 2005). These differences are exactly what leads to the creation of the words "male" and "female", which is what people use to refer to the term "sex" on a daily basis (Archer and Lloyd, 1985; Schudson, Beischel and van Anders, 2019). In relation to the individual's sex it is



genetics that determine it, making it considerably more challenging to change.

For instance, estrogen and progesterone levels are significantly higher in a female's body, which stimulates it to produce primary and secondary sex characteristics (such as breasts, menstruation, etc.) (Schudson, Beischel and van Anders, 2019; Torgrimson and Minson, 2005). Contrarily, males have far higher levels of testosterone, which aids in the development and maintenance of most typical male sexual traits (such as a deep voice, body hair, large and strong muscles, etc.) in addition to sperm production (Schudson, Beischel and van Anders, 2019; Torgrimson and Minson, 2005). The physiological and biological disparities between the sexes that (in most cases) can be visually perceptible are caused by these genetically determined elements (Pryzgodá and Chrisler, 2000; Schudson, Beischel and van Anders, 2019; Torgrimson and Minson, 2005).

Gender, in comparison with sex, is not completely based on the scientific differences, even though it is being influenced by the biological and physiological traits that people usually exhibit as "males" and "females" (Archer and Lloyd, 1985). Instead, gender is determined by the structures and beliefs that society has established regarding masculinity and femininity. Respectively, as "sex" as a concept uses terms "male" and "female", gender applies words "man" and "woman" (Unger 1979; West and Zimmerman, 1987; Pryzgodá and Chrisler, 2000). Most people's gender identities are either unconscious or imposed on them at a young age based on their biological sex (where male is a man and a female is a woman) (Unger 1979; West and Zimmerman, 1987). Here are a few simple examples: the colors allotted to children (blue for boys, pink for girls), the typical length of hair (men have short hair, women have long hair), the toys to play with, the careers to get, and the habits and interests they are "supposed" to embrace.

As a result, the difference in gender approaches that a significant number of people are brought up with, leads to various behavior patterns between men



and women not only from their side, but from societal perception as well (Pryzgodá and Chrisler, 2000). However, Delphy (1993) has another perspective on the topic highlighting that the relationship between sex and gender as well as the interaction between sex, sexuality, and reproduction needs to be reconsidered, as it is gender that precedes sex. She further added on by saying that “it is the social division of labour, and associated hierarchical relations, which lead to physiological sex being used to differentiate those who are assigned to be dominant from those who will be part of the subordinate gender/class” (Delphy, 1993, p.3).

Additionally, Torgrimson and Minson (2005) emphasize on the fact that these terminologies have in particular, several roots and interpretations, as well as complicated relationships between each other. However, the final conclusion that Torgrimson and Minson (2005) have come to lies in the fact that gender is mostly defined by the cultural lens while sex is explained in the light of biology.

As part of the gender/sex discussion, some authors (Nicholson, 1994; West and Zimmerman, 1987) explain the literal meanings to highlight the differences between the two by saying that “sex” is originated from the Latin word “sexus,” implying one of the two categories of organic nature that are differentiated as male or female, respectively. Whereas, the attributes of one sex that are often seen as “[...] behavioral, cultural, or psychological [...]” are referred to as gender. Consequently, scientists may use these concepts to sex-based research in a specific way by having a clear knowledge of these key definitions.

2.2.2 Gender and Entrepreneurship

As the current paper mainly works with the cultural and societal perception on women and women entrepreneurship (including the one in the aspects of family), this research would consider gender as the main concept rather than the sex.



Throughout the subject of social science, gender has grown in importance during the past fifty years (Acker, 1992). In Acker's (1992) analysis of social structure and cultural appraisal, gender is posited as a fundamental notion. The author (Acker, 1992) highlights the fact that populations are frequently split into two groups, men and women, which are contrasted in terms of gender roles, such as the distribution of time spent on household chores. In accordance with the distinctions between women and men, the gender is further defined as the prevailing patterns of human behaviour and societal institutions. As activities have a figurative meaning, gender can be explained as “[...] a pervasive symbol of power” (Scott, 1986; Acker, 1992 p. 567).

Mirchandani (1999) provides a critical analysis of feminist theory in relation to gender. Furthermore, Strawser, Hechavarría and Passerini (2021), proposed a framework which further clarified the concept of gender. According to them, gender may be considered a variable and is frequently defined and explained in terms of biological sex. This method goes hand in hand with an emphasis on the disparities between men and women (Calás and Smircich, 2006). Another approach is to treat gender “[...] interpretively and examine how it is constructed through processes” (Brickell, 2006, p. 102). In other words, the main goal of this strategy is to comprehend how gender is created, passed down through generations, and acquired. However, gender may also be taken as a “[...] practice and analyzing how gender is done – in other words, doing gender” (West and Zimmerman, 1987). According to this perspective, gender is fabricated and revised by the actions we perform every day.

Gender is heavily entwined with the concept of gendered institutions, according to Acker (1992), who goes on to consider it as “[...] processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life” (Acker, 1992, p. 567). Other evidence provided by the author shows that men in positions of authority have historically and still do today dominate and manage the most significant institutions, including law,



politics, religion, and the economy. The only institution in which women play a central part, but in reality still subordinate, is the family (Acker, 1992).

When it comes to discussing the intersection between gender and entrepreneurship a lot of research has highlighted that women often run other kinds of businesses, as compared to men (Calás, et al., 2009). For instance, women are more expected to own enterprises that work with industries where they can transcribe “caring values” (Calás, et al., 2009, p. 558). It is essential to notice that Calás, et al. (2009) specify that these stereotypes only contribute to the continuation of gender inequality between men and women both in the field of entrepreneurship and in society as a whole. And even though other authors (for instance, Bird and Brush, 2002) agree with that, it, sadly, still does not prevent this fact from being true in certain cases.

Similarly, Ahl (2006) showed that the entrepreneurial phenomena is profoundly gendered through the synthesis of several studies at the interface of gender and entrepreneurship. This information has been gathered with the help of contributions made in the academic research from a variety of theoretical perspectives that aim to highlight the distinctions (or overlaps) between men and women who are actively involved in entrepreneurship processes. In relation to this Ahl and Marlow (2012) specify the assumptions about how feminine weakness (including in the field of entrepreneurship) is deeply rooted in normative beliefs. With the objective to fix it women are more often suggested to use tools, attitudes, and behaviors to manage their gender-related issues in the form of business advice, training, and support techniques shortcomings (Ahl and Marlow, 2012). This fact seems to be rather ironic, as the mythical men’s entrepreneurial norm of high growth, high performing businesses is untrue. The predominance of men in the entrepreneurial world does exist, however, it may at certain times be unfairly exaggerated (Ahl and Marlow, 2012), which makes the gap between men and women entrepreneurship even wider.



Another point that is worth mentioning when it comes to women entrepreneurship is the presence of necessity in it. Necessity entrepreneurship is closely associated with industries having fewer obstacles to enter and involves serving local populations. Moreover, this may need less hours of work or ways of managing work hours so as to devote time to other interests, such as family life. On the contrary, necessity-driven entrepreneurship often scales less and is less growth-oriented than opportunity-driven entrepreneurship which involves creating a company to develop new goods or services (Fairlie and Fossen, 2020). There is evidence in the literature that more women than males launch firms as a result of necessity (Kelley, Singer and Herrington, 2012). According to certain research studies, women entrepreneurs often decide to start-up their firms as a second or third job, mostly for the matter of earning additional money (Pandey and Ansari, 2016).

As a result, scholars interested in figuring out how entrepreneurship and gender interact, eventually began to look at entrepreneurship itself through the prism of gender. This finally made it possible for research to move beyond exploring individual variations to digging into how gender is ingrained in entrepreneurial processes, interpretations of occurrences (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Mirchandani, 1999).

2.3 Pakistan in the academic literature

2.3.1 Entrepreneurship in Pakistan

Pakistan has always had a pro-élite bent in its policymaking. Particularly relevant here is the economic strategy that has favored the large-scale industry (Hussain, 1999; Haque, et al., 2006). As a result, this industry has grown based on mortgage incentives rather than entrepreneurial ones. Although the growth of the small-scale sector somewhat mirrors the traits of entrepreneurship, this sector has mostly developed as an unofficial sector that



is always under attack by the state in an effort to save its preferred child, the huge formal industry (Haque, 2007).

Chemin (2010) in the research has elaborated the history of Pakistan and trade reforms since it came into existence to develop a profound understanding of what entrepreneurship looked like and is at present in Pakistan. According to the author, Pakistan has prioritized large-scale manufacturing through the implementation of an import substitution policy that shields large-scale business owners from market pressures of competition and offers them plenty of opportunity for rent-seeking. Because of this, SMEs continue to receive little attention despite current trends in private sector entrepreneurship. Also, this has produced a difficult economic and social climate for entrepreneurship and the condition of small businesses in Pakistan in areas like hiring staff, obtaining financing, paying taxes, and especially contract enforcement (Schumpeter, 1934; Chemin, 2010).

An analysis of the 2002 judicial reform in Pakistan reveals that training in caseload management strategies may speed up the judiciary with little financial outlay (Haque, 2007). The result was a huge rise in entrepreneurial decisions to launch firms. It is hypothesized that this judicial reform, which cost 0.1 percent of Pakistan's GDP in 2002, might result in a 0.5 percent rise in Pakistan's GDP due to greater admission rates according to the 2007 World Bank Group Entrepreneurship Database (Chemin, 2010). This implies the judiciary playing a crucial role in influencing economic activity and weighing the benefits and costs of this policy, in nurturing entrepreneurship.

Unfortunately, the judicial reform was not implemented more widely in Pakistan, despite the potential economic benefits it would have. However, there are still a number of obstacles in the way of Pakistani companies and SMEs expanding internationally (Malik, 2010). To sum up, businesses in Pakistan will continue to have a challenging economic environment unless more reforms are adopted or present reforms are strengthened.



2.3.2 Gender roles and equality in Pakistan

The world's patriarchal system strongly favours men and identifies men with particular conceptions of feminism and masculine duties (York, 2011). Moreover, in Southeast and South Asian cultures, women in particular fight ceaselessly for independence and fundamental human rights (Lee and Park, 2011). Gender discrimination and sexism are supported by deeply ingrained cultural attitudes in Pakistan's patriarchal society. This can be understood by the fact that women are thought as traditionally feminine and men are taken as stereotypically masculine (Khalid, 2021).

In Pakistan, gender discrimination is a systemic problem throughout all regions, across all age brackets, and is virtually always consistent (Akram, 2018). Gender roles that aren't balanced and severe gender discrimination also significantly increase the risk of violence against women. (Ali, et al., 2011). On top of that, through enforcing numerous religious and cultural obligations, patriarchal ideologies are deeply rooted in society. Regrettably, religion is particularly used as a tool to limit women to be confined to the house and be utterly dependent on their male family members (Khalid, 2021).

According to Khalid (2021, p. 339), the concept of "honor" is central to Pakistani culture, which places a strong emphasis on the family which means that women are held accountable for the "[...] integrity, stability, harmony, and reputation of the entire family, even if this means enduring various forms of maltreatment, injustices, and discrimination". Whereas, Critelli (2010) argues that pressures of such conceptual themes differ from women to women and family to family. Therefore, usually average and upper middle class women are better in control than lower middle class, rural and uneducated ones (Critelli, 2010).

In addition to this, women in Pakistan aspire to untrue, unrealistic, and harmful norms that are not just desired but also highly valued in society. In



other words, a “good” woman is one who is “ [...] tolerant, obedient, unselfish, calm, empathetic, reliable, compromising, coordinator, hospitable, and relationship oriented, [...] perform household chores, care for her husband, children, and parents-in-law, and even support her family financially when the need arises” (Ali, et al., 2011; Khalid, 2021, p. 339). Although carrying out all these obligations, she never engages in any domestic or outdoor activity without first getting approval from her husband or any other male member of the family (Ali, et al., 2011).

Gender roles are closely connected to gender stereotypes, which are characteristics that a person attaches to a certain group of people (Eagly, 2009). In other words, Gender roles are defined as "society's shared ideas that apply to individuals on the basis of their socially designated sex" (Eagly and Mladinic, 1989; Khalid, 2021, p. 340). Gender roles can be further separated into two categories, Knowing what is required of a man or woman in a certain scenario is crucial from a descriptive perspective, whereas from a prescriptive lens, one should be aware of the behavior that is anticipated or desired (Rudman and Glick, 2001; Eagly and Mladinic, 1989). Yet, both aspects prevent women from being accepted and doing well in the job (Heilman and Parks-Stamm, 2007). Moreover, in academic writings, “agency” is frequently connected to traits associated with males, such as independence, assertiveness, vigor, and decisiveness, which are seen as traits that men are more likely to possess. On the other hand, having “communal” traits like politeness, compassion, obedience, tolerance, and timidity is always associated with being a feminine stereotype which has been further proven that these gender stereotypes exist in all civilizations (Heilman and Parks-Stamm, 2007).

In Pakistan, gender discrimination is most prevalent (Shah and Baporikar, 2013). According to the data provided by Khalid (2021) in 2017 Pakistan was placed 148th out of 150 countries in statistics on gender inequality, placing it penultimate overall. Despite the fact that women are legally entitled to certain rights under the 1973 constitution of Pakistan, such as the



“[...] right to property, the freedom to move around, the right to an education, the right to get married with their own consent, and the prohibition of gender discrimination [...]”, these rights are rarely exercised by women in reality due to social pressures and traditional beliefs (OECD, 2010; Fazl-E-Haider, 2018).

Having considered gender allocated roles and societal beliefs, women, regardless of their level of education and employment, face pressure to prove that they are the ideal housewives and caregiver in addition to participating in the outside labor market (Khan, 2021). Furthermore, apart from social standing, financial condition, education levels, and marital status, it may be stated that women in Pakistan are often viewed as subservient (helpers) to males throughout their lives, who lack decision making authority or autonomy in domestic affairs (Sathar & Kazi, 2000; Nadeem & Ahmad, 2018; Rawat, 2014). On the other hand, several research (Shah & Baporikar, 2013; Khurshid, 2016) found that elements including the family structure, women's profession, and education all have a considerable influence on gender discrimination.

2.4 Family as an Institution

Monticelli, Bernardon and Trez (2020) examining entrepreneurship and different factors that influence it come to the conclusions that, firstly, family, indeed, is one of the most crucial determinants in that equation and, secondly, should be viewed from the perspective of institutional theory. Based on the previous research the authors claim that family is truly an institution as both of them are systems “of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions” (Hodgson, 2006; Monticelli, Bernardon and Trez, 2020, p. 59). Developing this definition further, one may say that family develops certain moral values and norms, which later leads to the appearance of “[...] structures, processes, and policies [...]” (Monticelli, Bernardon and Trez, 2020, p. 59). As a result, these inside regulations of family as an institution can become either an opportunity for



women to open their businesses or a restriction that holds that back (Monticelli, Bernardon and Trez, 2020). It depends on the excessive number of other subfactors that have been found in previous research on the topic. In the current literature review the authors have combined all subfactors into three categories (gender assigned roles, background of the family and children in the household), which are presented in more detail below.

2.4.1 Gender assigned roles

According to Schwartz (1987) and more recent research conducted by Monticelli, Bernardon and Trez (2020), a significant number of people, across many cultures, is influenced by the family as a gendered institution. Family serves as the major platform for socialization and imparts figurative identities that are thought to entitle a “feminine” woman and a “masculine” man (Hussain, et al., 2015). In addition to this, women and men have physiological distinctions that are claimed by theorists to interpret various gender roles and the resulting attitudes (Nowak and Wyleżalek, 2019). As per the customs of assigning chores to each sex, women and men are assigned separate jobs inside the household. Hussain, et al. (2015) further elaborate the fact by claiming that the concept of stereotypes emerges within the society as a result of diverse behaviour patterns, physical characteristics and psychological traits. In other words, parents and spouses play distinct and exclusive responsibilities in the family and carry out particular activities (Hussain, et al., 2015; Nowak and Wyleżalek, 2019).

Specifying this perspective it can be said that frequently in the Pakistani context the husband is seen as the “breadwinner” and wife is considered to be a “homemaker” (Hussain, et al., 2015; Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012; Roomi and Parrott, 2008; Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006). As a “homemaker”, the woman is expected to take care of the household and the children with such everyday tasks as cleaning, cooking, spending time with the kids, etc. (Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012; Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006). In addition to this, oftenly the family lives with the parents-in-law



(more specifically, husband's parents), which also contributes to the list of family-related issues that the wife is supposed to take care of (Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006).

Another aspect that seems to be a crucial part of "woman's responsibility" in the Pakistani household is the emotional support (Hussain, et al., 2015; Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012). The authors (Hussain, et al., 2015; Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012) highlight that it is usually a mother who has various conversations with the children and helps them to deal with certain situations or feelings. Interestingly, the gender approach is present even there: with the daughters the mother is most likely to have "more supportive and affiliative speech" trying to encourage them, while with sons it is "independence and autonomy" that are to be embraced in them (Hussain, et al., 2015, p. 5).

An attentive reader might notice that in the list of women's responsibilities there is one area, more specifically - a job, that is never included. That is directly related to the "breadwinner" aspect of Pakistani society, which is discussed further. Previous literature on the topic has found multiple evidences of the fact that the husband is the one who, from the perspective of Pakistani society, is supposed to financially support the family until older sons are mature enough to contribute (Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006). Moreover, Hussain, et al. (2015) highlight that so-called power in the household of the male applies not only to economic, but to other aspects of daily life as well. Men are usually the decision makers when it comes to education, jobs, etc. and their words are the last ones in the discussion (Hussain, et al., 2015).

Following this logic, it becomes clear how much of an impact husband's word has when it comes to the decision whether a wife is "allowed" to open her own business or not. In certain cases it may be a breakdealer: if the husband is against it, the wife might not even try to implement her entrepreneurial ideas at all (Hussain, et al., 2015). Both Hussain, et al. (2015)



and Rehman and Azam Roomi (2012) see it as an evidence of Pakistan being a highly patriarchal society, which it is. The distribution of gender roles imposed by Pakistani society is so deeply ingrained in the culture that Hussain, et al. (2015) note that changes are unlikely to happen, and even in case they do, it might take a significant amount of time.

2.4.2 Financial and educational background of the family

In the current subheading of the literature review the authors have decided to include two other family-related factors that have been discovered by previous researchers (Tahir, et al. (2018), Tambunan (2009) to have influence on women entrepreneurship: *financial situation of the family* and *husband's educational background*.

Starting with the first factor, *financial situation of the family*, it is worth mentioning that it is directly related to the previously discussed gender assigned roles. As in the Pakistani society the role of “breadwinner” is given to the husband only (in most of the cases), oftenly financial situation of the family becomes equal either to the 1) income of the husband; 2) joint income of husband and elder sons (Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006).

However, the changes that Hussain, et al. (2015) address to, are slowly happening: more and more frequently evidences of women starting a 9-5 job or opening their own businesses are happening (Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012). Interestingly, the research conducted by Tahir, et al. (2018) has shown that in families where the husband's income is relatively extensive, a wife is more likely to start a business than in poor families, where, theoretically, there is a bigger need for additional money.

Tahir, et al. (2018) underline two main reasons for that. Firstly, “as men have traditionally earned and controlled the family income in these societies in many cases, they tend to dominate decision making and resource distribution processes within the family” (Tahir, et al., 2018, p. 2). Based on this fact, Tahir, et al. (2018) develop the idea that the more a husband earns, the



stronger his influence within the family is. Accordingly, this creates a greater emotional burden on the wife within the family, since she feels less valuable as a member of this cell of society. As a result, it “may confine women to the household, limit their educational opportunities, constrain their independent mobility, and deprive them of financial autonomy” (Tahir, et al., 2018, p. 2). That is why becoming an entrepreneur can be seen as a “key to freedom”: women get a stronger influence on the family decision making process, contribute financially, as well as make their own living and fulfil their entrepreneurial desires (Tahir, et al., 2018).

Secondly, Tahir, et al. (2018) have noticed that in poorer families, the *educational background* of both husband and wife tends to be lower in comparison with the families where the income is higher. It leads to two main results: 1) lack of wife’s education limits her to a certain extent in opening and running her own business; 2) lack of husband’s education does not allow him to be open-minded enough to “allow” his wife to be an entrepreneur despite the gender stereotypes of Pakistani society (Tahir, et al., 2018). Even though both of these issues are of great interest, the current paper examines only family-related aspects of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan, thus, the former outcome concludes at this point, while the discussion of the latter one continues below.

Earlier research composed by Tambunan (2009) has provided similar results to the ones described above: there is a strong connection between husband’s educational background and his ability to support his wife in being an entrepreneur. The only difference that has been noticed between these two researches lies in the fact that Tambunan (2009) highlights that it is not only the husband, who has a significant influence on the woman. The study has discovered that since a woman after a marriage moves in with her husband and lives together with the parents-in-law, accordingly, their educational background plays a distinctive role as well (Tambunan,2009). Here is the direct citation from the mentioned study: “the better the education of the



[parents-in-law]/husband is, the less influence or the traditional thinking in their attitudes towards women ... [there is]" (Tambunan, 2009, p. 38).

2.4.3 Children in the household

As it has been stated previously, societal interpretation of gender and, hence, roles assigned to gender matter to a great extent in the context of Pakistan. Rehman and Azam Roomi (2012) highlight that this statement is true not only in relation to husband and wife, but children in the household as well. A significant number of patriarchal societies (including Pakistan) see the so-called "obligation" of motherhood to be stronger than fatherhood (Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012). To put it another way, women have much more pressure to be good mothers than men to be good fathers. Analyzing this statement from the perspective of entrepreneurship, it can be said that women might think twice before they open their businesses in the interest of their children. Firstly, women deeply care for their children and want to provide the best upbringing to them, which also includes a constant presence in their lives (Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012). Secondly, the previously mentioned social pressure around the way motherhood looks is enormous, women might face a certain level of judgement not only from society in general, but closest family members (i.e. husband, parents) as well, according to the findings of Tariq (2018). As a result, it can become a massive barrier on the way of becoming an entrepreneur.

However, the same arguments (children in the household, motherhood in the eyes of the society) might be viewed as motivations as well. The same study conducted by Tariq (2018) has shown that some women choose self-employment, as it provides more flexible hours, which are a great benefit for those having kids. In addition, husbands in the study have supported this initiative, as they believed it would be better for kids as well (Tariq, 2018).



The phenomena of women running their own businesses and taking care of the children at the same time has become so widespread that previous research on the field has even introduced such term as “mumpreneurship” (Khalid, Mehta and Serfraz, 2020; Makola, 2022; Rodrigues, Daniel and Franco, 2022). Makola (2022, p. 1) identifies a mumpreneur as “an individual that takes advantage of business opportunities in a geographical and social space that allows them to combine the roles of business ownership and motherhood”. Khalid, Mehta and Serfraz (2020, p. 3979) provide a rather similar definition in their research emphasizing that mumpreneur is the “person who has found and endeavors new entrepreneurship business openings socially and geographic perspective that search to incorporate the demands of motherhood and business possession”. As it can be seen from the previous definitions, key elements of “mumpreneurship” as a term are “business opportunities”, “entrepreneurship” and “motherhood” (Khalid, Mehta and Serfraz, 2020; Makola, 2022).

However, Rodrigues, Daniel and Franco (2022) has taken a different approach to the analysis of what mumpreneurship is and have discovered that crucial parts of the phenomena are not only self-employment and children, but the well-being of a woman as well. The same findings has been shown by the study conducted by Rehman and Azam Roomi (2012): the authors highlight that without achieving work-life balance the potential success of established by women enterprises is questioned and therefore deserves to be drawn academic attention to (Rehman and Azam Roomi,2012; Rodrigues, Daniel and Franco, 2022).

2.4.4. Women entrepreneurship in Pakistan

As it has been mentioned earlier, as more women enter the workforce, they have difficulties juggling their job and family responsibilities. Due to women's conventional home responsibilities, religious regulations and cultural norms and beliefs, the scenario is more challenging in patriarchal civilizations like Pakistan. Finding a work-life balance turned out to be one



of the most important intrinsic motivators for women to establish their own enterprises, according to Rehman and Azam Roomi (2012). Having their own businesses allow them the access to the independence, authority, and creativity to balance their family and community obligations (Rehman and Roomi, 2012). In contrast to this, the primary hurdles women face in achieving balance in a patriarchal culture include time constraints, gender prejudice, social and cultural conventions, as well as familial obligations. Therefore, the most successful methods used by women to balance the conflicting demands of job and family include “[...] strategic planning, organizing, and delegation” (Rehman and Azam Roomi 2012, p. 209).

Besides that, it was asserted that graduate mumpreneurs in Pakistan are driven mostly by the need to both upbringing their children and making money from their businesses (Tariq, 2018). Such choice works well with self-employment and the adaptable hours of a home-based business. It was further stated that mumpreneurs see themselves first and foremost as mothers, and after that as anybody else. However, it is important to notice that they want to improve their quality of life and provide for their family as well. Another aspect to that matter has been brought by Tariq (2018) that concluded in his research findings that their inability to build and expand their entrepreneurial endeavors is mostly due to the lack of sufficient state assistance and financing facilities in Pakistan. The author has continued by saying that workshops and training opportunities were vital for women entrepreneurs to improve their skills and expand their current enterprises. In addition, women entrepreneurs also considered patriarchal and male-dominated nature of the society to be a barrier. Consequently, home-based businesses became their first preference. Whereas in some cases, the family's male members had a great deal of influence over their choices to launch enterprises and served as their major source of support both financially and emotionally (Tariq, 2018).

Hussain, et al. (2015)'s argued that Pakistan is under a large influence of gender stereotyping. Research claimed that “[...] gender stereotyping is a



sociocultural production, which is developed and inculcated in the network of institutions, social interaction, and social relationships” (Hussain, et al. 2015, p. 9). With regard to Pakistani patterns of men and females or masculinity and femininity, the major source is the family, which is a turning point in implanting gender disparity through gender discrimination, work allocation, and unequal parenting practices. It was further emphasized in the study that families educate people about gender-appropriate and inappropriate behavior and direct them toward the social and cultural norms (Hussain, et al., 2015). Furthermore, it was concluded that treating children differently by seeing boys as “[...] strong, aggressive, bold, and independent and daughters as delicate, fragile, emotional, sensitive, and dependent [...]” helps youngsters to act reasonably (Hussain, et al., 2015, p. 9).

As a short conclusion, it can be said that there is a significant number of factors within a family influencing women’s decision of whether they are to open their own enterprise or not. Some of them are: social and cultural norms reflected in the behaviour of husband and other family members, opportunity to spend more time with children, home responsibilities, financial aspects, etc. Even though the literature on the topic has provided interesting and rather insightful information, it seems essential to continue the current study and listen to, as well as interpret the first hand narratives of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

3 Methodology

This chapter of the paper starts with research assumptions in the light of ontological, epistemological and axiological approaches. In order to allow the themes to emerge from the data, interpretive research philosophy is further explained. The discussion is built on by explaining the research approach followed by the research design. Moreover, the data collection method is structured by sharing the process of developing the interview guide and interview set up keeping GDPR central. Along with sampling technique and size, the chapter also discusses data analysis methodology. Lastly,



quality criteria together with research ethics are included as the closing chapters of the research methodology.

3.1 Research assumptions and philosophy

Looking ahead, it can be said that the current paper is to adopt a combination of deductive and abductive research approaches via conducting semi-structured interviews with women entrepreneurs who are residing with their families in Pakistan. However, before that is to be discussed further in the upcoming chapters of “Methodology”, it is essential to start with the assumptions and philosophy that the current paper is implying.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) highlights that there are three main types of assumptions: ontological, epistemological and axiological, and as all of them are to be used in the current study, below is presented a short description of each, together with the reasoning in relation to the study.

Following ontological approach, the authors as “social researchers, [consider their] fundamental aim is to understand reality” (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019, p. 26). Applicable to this study, the authors ask questions: What is the nature of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan? What is the influence of family on it? What is it like being a woman entrepreneur in Pakistan? The answers are expected to be rather subjectivistic, as the reality of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan is “socially constructed” and “relativistic” (meaning, that the reality of being a woman entrepreneur in Pakistan can be different for different people), which, according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p. 135) are the evidences of subjectivism.

Epistemology is linked to the “assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 133). Accordingly, the questions raised in that matter are: What is known about the connection of family and women entrepreneurship in Pakistan? How can we collect good-quality data on the topic? What contribution to the



existing knowledge can we make? Once again, the authors expect to get subjective answers to these questions, as the knowledge Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) mention in that matter is to be experiences and stories of individuals connected to the specific context.

The last, but not the least assumption is axiology, which works with “the role of values and ethics” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 134). In relation to this it is important to mention that the current paper is guided by the theoretical framework in regard to entrepreneurship and gender studies that have been mentioned earlier in chapter 2, “Literature review”.

Based on that reasoning, the conclusion that the current study is including interpretive research philosophy can be made. The interpretive philosophy implies that “different people of different cultural backgrounds, under different circumstances and at different times make different meanings, and so create and experience different social realities” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 149). The aim of the current paper is to explore these realities, transition the stories of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and, thus, “create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 149).

3.2 Research approach

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) highlight that the majority of the research projects imply the usage of theory and, consequently, request an appropriate theory development approach. There are three ways at present which contribute to the process of developing theories: deductive, inductive and abductive reasoning (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The most vivid feature of the deductive approach lies in “generalising from the general to the specific”, while the inductive approach does the opposite by “generalizing from the specific to the general” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 153).



Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p. 154) specify that the deductive approach tries to “explain causal relationships between concepts and variables” and as the current research aims to investigate the connection between family-related aspects and women entrepreneurship, the named approach serves the purpose of the paper in a better way and that is why has been adapted in the present research.

According to the deductive approach, the process of collecting data has been started by reviewing past literature on the topic with the focus on entrepreneurship as a concept, gender and entrepreneurship, difference between gender and sex, as well as family as an institution.

The next step that has been taken was narrowing down the research area to the current scenario of Pakistan: features of entrepreneurship, gender equality and women entrepreneurship with the spotlight on gendered assigned role, financial and educational background of the family and children in the household. All of these family-related factors affecting women entrepreneurship in Pakistan have been of great help for the authors to specify the core of the current research and shape the research question.

The outline or organisation of topics in the literature review section has served to be a framework, which further has helped to structure the questions to be asked to the women entrepreneurs during the interviews.

Following the previously mentioned framework for the interview, the researchers have connected the key findings from the empirical material to the theories proposed. By doing so, the authors add another theory development approach: the abductive one (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The abductive approach is “generalising from the interactions between the specific and the general” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 153). As a result, the authors achieve the purpose of an abductive approach to research by drawing conclusions from the set of observations and making



connections with the existing literature (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

According to this way of conducting interviews, the authors then collected empirical data that was linked back to the theory to suggest new findings and propose new ways to conceptualize the relationship between family and women entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

Consequently, the abductive technique is most suited in the current thesis to respond to the research issue. Limited amount of existing literature talks about family and women entrepreneurship in Pakistan which eventually has encouraged the researchers to explore further in this area of interest. Although it offers limited direction, it can be used as a starting point for the research. The aim is to better understand this distinct context and its influence on the Pakistani women entrepreneurs and as well as to theoretically contribute to the existing literature in this context.

3.3 Research design

The goal of the study, which involves refining an academically debatable topic, has a great impact on the research design. Likewise, the variety of potential outcomes makes it possible to acquire updated knowledge about family-related cultural and behavioural patterns.

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), there are different approaches to research designs such as descriptive, evaluative, exploratory and explanatory. The main aim of the descriptive research design method is to “gain an accurate profile of events, persons or situations” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 187), while the evaluative method is focused on the effectiveness of certain solutions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Having considered the characteristics of the current research, it is evident that descriptive research may not be the best strategy to achieve the goal



since the expected outcomes tend to be vague. This research's objective is neither to compare concepts as in a comparative study nor to assess an existing framework, as would be the case in evaluative studies. Thus, none of these research design techniques will be used in the current study.

Whereas, by conducting an exploratory study, we could gain insightful information about the area of interest and gain a better understanding of the situation. In order to better comprehend a topic or an issue when one is unaware of its exact nature, an exploratory study proved extremely helpful. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p. 187), there are several methods for conducting exploratory research such as “[...]search of the literature; interviewing ‘experts’ in the subject; conducting in-depth individual interviews or conducting focus group interviews”. Exploratory research has contributed to this research because of its characteristic of “[...]flexibility and adaptability to change” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 187). Through this, the researchers can alter their course while performing exploratory research because there’s a possibility of showing up unexpected information and ideas.

In contrast to this, explanatory research establishes a connection between variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Furthermore, when there is limited information available, the explanatory research technique looks into why something happens. The current research has involved this approach to learn more about a subject (such as in this case family as a motivation or a challenge for women entrepreneurs of Pakistan) and figure out how or why a specific phenomena is happening (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

As stated in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p. 188), “[...] a research study may combine more than one purpose in its design”. Based on this assertion, the authors believe that a combination of exploratory and explanatory techniques will be the most effective for producing the desired results. While the exploratory approach allowed for a thorough examination of the phenomenon and context of family as an institution and women



entrepreneurship, the explanatory aspect of the study allowed us to delve even further into the connection between family and women entrepreneurship in the context of Pakistan. By interviewing women entrepreneurs about their experiences of living within their families and opting for this profession, the current study examines how they were influenced positively or negatively by their respective family members.

3.4 Data collection method

3.4.1 Data collection and interview guide

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) propose that semi-structured interviews are a suitable way for conducting a qualitative study. As the current research can be called as such, the semi-structured interviews are adapted as the data collection method. The specifics of semi-structured interviews lies in the fact that the researcher starts with “a predetermined list of themes, and [...] some key questions related to these themes, to guide the conduct of each interview” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 437).

Following this structure, the authors of the current thesis have conducted a literature review highlighting the main topics regarding the connection between the family and women entrepreneurship in the context of Pakistan. The more generalized themes have been chosen to be: gender assigned roles, background of the family and children in the household. In addition to this, a set of open-ended questions has been created to embrace a discussion between the authors and the participants within previously mentioned topics. Exploring each of these themes with the participants of semi-structured interviews, the researchers are unable to identify “the underpinning reality that ... [they] seek to reveal” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 437).

Interview guide

The interview guide that has been used by the authors consists of five parts: introduction, three main research topics (which are gender assigned roles,



financial and educational background of the family, children in the household) and conclusion (see chapter 8.1). At the introductory part of the interview through the set of the prepared questions participants are encouraged to describe themselves, their businesses and their family members they live with. The following parts of the interview guide are the topics that have been discovered as the central ones in the process of conducting a literature review. Most of the questions at that part are concerning distribution of roles and responsibilities within a family, the structure of the family budget, emotional support, education, parenting, as well as experiences related to being an entrepreneur. The interview is finished with the set of questions related to motivations and challenges within a family that women in Pakistan have faced while being entrepreneurs.

In total the interview guide consists of 26 key questions that have been prepared by the authors. However, it is essential to highlight that as the interviews were semi-structured and the research philosophy approach is believed to be an interpretivist one, the flow of the interviews is rather flexible, as suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019). In other words, even though the researchers had a list of topics to go through in mind, they are open-minded for the unexpected results (i.e. narratives or experiences) to come up during the interviews, which would only enrich the understanding of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan for the academic society.

Interview Set-Up

As all of the participants are women entrepreneurs who have opened their businesses in Pakistan, all of them are currently located there and are residing with their families. Because of that reason it has seemed to be challenging to conduct interviews in person. In order to maintain the feasibility and conductibility of the study, the interviews will be conducted



using electronic platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 478).

Since all participants are Pakistanis, they tend to be more comfortable at responding in their native language, Urdu. Fortunately, one of the interviewers is a native Urdu speaker, therefore, the interviews will be conducted in Urdu for valid responses, interpreted in English by the same interviewer, while note taking will be done by the second researcher simultaneously (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

In contrast to observation, which is just temporary, video recording produces a lasting record. This has been adopted as it enables the researcher to accomplish a number of goals that would not be feasible if observation consisted just of viewing and taking notes (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). “[...] A recording can be replayed several times to allow the researcher to reflect on the behaviours being shown, informants’ interactions and the role of the environment or setting” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 416). It has made it possible for the researchers to improve the quality of their data coding and to confirm observed occurrences. Taking this into consideration, ethical and privacy concerns relating to this and other features of the current study are to be examined later on in this thesis report.

Objectives of the research were clearly explained and the participants were well aware of the expected time duration along with their approval for the research interview. This has eventually led to the fact that they were more likely agreeing to be interviewed. Nonetheless, it was kept in mind that there is always room for some negotiation and the interview was to be scheduled for when the candidate would feel the least pressure (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

General Data Protection Regulation

As the current paper and its authors use personal data, it is essential to handle and process it correctly. To do so, the authors have used the General Data



Protection Regulation that is recommended by Linnæus University for students as the guideline (GDPR for students, 2021).

For conducting the semi-structured interviews the authors needed to have a written permission by the participants to be interviewed and video recorded for research purposes. That has been done with the application of the consent form, where the name of the participant, as well as her signature are revealed. For the aim of staying anonymous, that personal data is not to be shared in the paper, but to be processed and protected.

Each of the participants have been given a fictional name number (for instance, Anna) and the information provided by them is to be presented in the current paper in that way. The information of which fiction name refers to which participant is stored separately, in two documents, access to which only the authors have. After the research project is completed personal data will be erased.

3.4.2 Sampling

In conformity with the goals and the research inquiries, business women owners in Pakistan made up the population on which the sample was based. The target population (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019) has comprised women entrepreneurs who demonstrated a multitude of experiences in the context of familial influence on them since there are a lot of potential variations and available knowledge in the existing literature.

Given that the purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of this particular group of people, using a random sample approach seemed inappropriate. The objective of the study involved gaining responses from specific women entrepreneurs who were residing with their respective families. Therefore, the women entrepreneurs who were contacted to participate in the interviews were specifically chosen since the convenience sampling strategy would not have enabled the researchers to reach the necessary sort of women entrepreneurs. For instance, the study's participants



were specifically chosen to reflect a variety of personal and familial situations (single or married; with children or without; living in joint family or not, etc.).

This made it feasible to choose participants carefully in relation to the subject of the study, particularly by offering a wide range of parameters to provide detailed and insightful responses (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). The interviewees, who were all business women owners, were “accessible”, allowing for a more thorough examination of their perspectives and experiences (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Sampling size

For deciding on the appropriate sampling size for the current paper the concept of data saturation has been used. Data saturation is commonly used as evidence that the adequate number of interviews has been conducted. Yet, it lacks specific benchmarks for when it is attained (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019, p. 399). While on the contrary, if it is not attained, it may not provide information on the validity of the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), a homogenous group may consist of 4 to 12 respondents whereas a heterogenous group may comprise a number between 12 to 30. Nevertheless, in qualitative research, "data collecting and analysis skills are more important than [...] the size of your sample" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 315).

Considering the fact that data collection and evaluating the empirical data is central in qualitative study, the researchers have finalized a sample of 12 women entrepreneurs from Pakistan.

Process of selecting participants

The women entrepreneurs were contacted via social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Most of the entrepreneurs were chosen from within



the researchers' personal social network. Whereas, some of them were from the contacts of the chosen women entrepreneurs. Few were the ones who had their personal social media accounts and pages on Facebook and Instagram. Before finally selecting the sample, it was made sure whether they had their own running businesses. The search filter was set to the area Pakistan and the terms "women," "entrepreneur," "founder," or "co-founder" were combined. Active entrepreneurial activities were required to be evident on their profile for the sampling framework. Moreover, women who currently live with their families were prioritised in the selection process as the primary goal of the study is to analyze familial influence on women entrepreneurs.

It was crucial to have access to events that illustrated various challenges and motivating factors so that sufficient data would be made accessible for further analysis. The process of acquiring participants was mutually agreed upon, with one researcher recommending suitable interview subjects, while the other one affirmed or contested their eligibility.

The researchers could have had more women entrepreneurs to focus on, however, due to the limitations with respect to availability and tendency to answer certain questions, the sample size was confined to 12. In some cases, few women entrepreneurs were contacted who had first agreed to respond but later on, due to some personal reasons, backed-off from the whole process. Time constraints, also, were a big reason to limit the sample size.

To sum up, 17 entrepreneurs were approached; three of them did not respond, and two of them stated that they preferred not to engage, which led to the holding of 12 interviews. Background information of interviewed women entrepreneurs is organized and presented below in Table 1. It contains information of participants' fictional names, type of business they have established, cities they are residing in, marital status and families they are currently living with together with the length of the interview:



№	Fictional names	Business area	City	Family members	Marital status	Interview Length
1	Maryam	Pharmaceuticals	Lahore	Parents-in-law Brother-in-law Sister-in-law Husband Daughter	Married	40 Minutes
2	Bushra	Tailoring shop	Islamabad	Daughter 3 Sons	Divorced	35 minutes
3	Sara	Cosmetics (Online business)	Karachi	Brother Brother's wife Brother's children 2 Daughters	Separated	45 minutes
4	Mira	Kitchen utensils (Online business)	Karachi	Parents-in-law Brother-in-law's wife and children Husband 2 Sons	Married	36 minutes
5	Ayesha	Pharmaceuticals	Lahore	Parents-in-law Brother-in-law's wife and children Husband 2 Daughters	Married	43 minutes
6	Sehar	Customized clothing	Lahore	Parents Brother, his wife and children 1 Daughter	Divorced	45 minutes
7	Rehana	School	Muzaffarabad	Parents-in-law Brother-in-law's wife and children Husband 3 Daughters	Married	40 minutes
8	Nida	Bags, accessories, branded clothes	Lahore	Husband 1 Daughter	Married	45 minutes
9	Seema	Cosmetics (Online business)	Lahore	Husband	Married	37 minutes
10	Tahira	Customized gift baskets	Islamabad	Husband 2 Sons	Married	35 minutes
11	Farina	Clothing (Online business)	Karachi	Mother and Brother	Single	38 minutes
12	Saeeda	Customized clothing	Faisalabad	Mother-in-law Husband 1 Daughter	Married	41 minutes



3.5 Data analysis method

3.5.1 Data Reduction vs Maintaining Data Integrity

It is essential to organize and consolidate the immense quantity of data into observations and themes in order to analyze it and derive new information and ideas from it (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). In contrast to certain qualitative methodologies that preserve the reliability through, for instance, a storytelling approach, the focus of this research is to aggregate the insights of many business women owners in relation to their families to compare and contrast, formulate recurring themes, and more generalizable findings.

3.5.2 Preparing the data for analysis

Interviewees were given an option to communicate in English and/or Urdu as per their convenience. In cases where participants communicated completely in Urdu Language, one of the researchers (being a native Urdu speaker) recorded the conversation and interpreted it to the other one in order to avoid any point of ambiguity. For the reason of acquiring a word-to-word transcript of the interviews and handling the volume of data efficiently, the *Microsoft Word online transcription tool* was made use of. With this, researchers saved time by revisiting the transcribed document whenever it was required for appropriate analysis. The findings were compared to the initial data throughout the *data cleaning process*, a few errors were rectified and remarks were added to review the interview setting (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The resulting paperwork was archived anonymously with the respondents' fictional names (i.e. Anna, Maria, etc.), if in case they desired to verify the data's authenticity. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), participants may demand to modify certain areas of the interview because of the discrepancy between spoken and written language, which might dramatically alter the data and outcomes. Yet in this research,



no participants have mentioned that they would like to go through their transcripts of the interviews.

3.5.3 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis serves to be one of the most versatile methods and includes almost all relevant ways to analyze data. Furthermore, it assists in gathering substantially far-reaching data aiding in identifying important themes and arriving at conclusions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). These three steps make up the process:

3.5.3a *Becoming familiar with the data*

“Familiarisation involves the need to read and re-read your data during your analysis, [...] look for meanings, recurring themes and patterns in your data” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 652). Although the fact that all interviews were conducted with two interviewers ultimately made it possible to get somewhat familiar with the data. In addition to this, going through the transcripts and tallying them with the recorded data has improved interpretation of the information gathered. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p. 397), “interpretation arises from understanding the insights which illustrate that observation is a process requiring immersion in a context in order to produce valid and reliable results”. To cut it short, to be able to discern themes and patterns, this immersion process has seemed to be essential (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

3.5.3b *Coding the data, searching for themes and recognizing relationships*

Coding is assigning a code that signifies or summarizes the meaning of each unit of data inside a set of data (such as a recording or manuscript in this case). This approach was used by researchers to make every bit of information of their interest understandable for extensive evaluation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).



As this study is qualitative, the data sets are of significant size and have varied elements. Coding is consequently a key technique for organizing data so that it can be reorganized and identified using the appropriate codes. Therefore, this procedure helped to break apart the original data items and put data units with similar attributes together so that they could be compared to other groups of related data units (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). In other words, the coding of the data made it possible to rapidly and precisely skim and scan the transcripts and group the data into themes.

The authors sought to discover themes, patterns, and distinctive features of the women entrepreneurs' relationship to their respective family structures and setting in order to respond to the study objectives. Therefore, Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) recommend searching for recurrence, groupings, commonalities, variations, as well as incomplete information, among other things, to do this. Repetition, simply, by numerous participants was insufficient to develop a theme from these elements. In addition, a theme that emerged from the data required to be related to the study objectives, purpose, and intended theoretical background (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

In order to make connections between the major concepts discussed during each interview and the new information acquired, prior notes and insights were revisited and evaluated. This eventually led to grouping the codes into themes as the researchers carried on conducting additional interviews and spent a great deal of time analyzing the participants' opinions.

Interviews made varying degrees of contributions to the study's final product. While some women entrepreneurs provided a great deal of detail on the gendered roles and attitudes of family members and greatly added to the research's content, others contributed with different perspectives but were able to indirectly back up the trends raised by the others. As the researchers approached a saturation point, they came across a variety of perspectives and the data began to accumulate in a structure, aligning with earlier predictions of themes. As we approached a saturation point, varied thoughts appeared



and the data began to come together, confirming earlier predictions of themes. The influx of fresh ideas and connections formed an interesting pattern.

Following this, major themes were identified, appropriateness was attained, links were made, and a structure was established as we approached the end of the series of interviews. It was evident that the required conclusions have been reached with the data that has been gathered and adding more data may not contribute any worthwhile ideas (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Based on that, the empirical part has been structured the following way. It first starts with the subchapter highlighting the reasons for becoming entrepreneurs that have been mentioned by Pakistani women. As for other subchapters, the authors have kept the themes specified by the previous literature on the topic (gender assigned roles, financial and educational background of the family, children in the household) and have added two new themes that have emerged during the interview process (attitude of the spouse and his family, family of origin). In addition, few subtopics have emerged. The structure of influencing factors has been summarized in the following diagram:

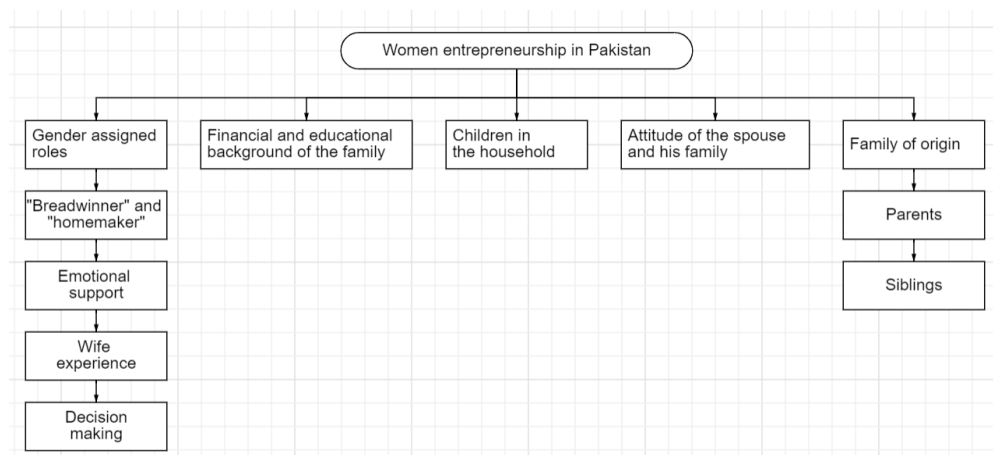


Figure 1 - The structure of thematic analysis.



3.5.3c Refining themes and testing propositions

Themes were created and recreated in the preceding stage, and their refinement and confirmation of theories were built with the help of analytical study for different concepts and contrasting experiences (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Consequently, the final list of themes described in the previous section was designed after a long initial list of themes was trimmed to eliminate needless repetition.

3.6 Quality criteria

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p. 216) propose that “qualitative research based on interpretive assumptions, where reality is regarded as being socially constructed and multifaceted” requires the application of alternative criteria to assess the quality of research design. As the current research falls under the previously mentioned description, alternative quality criteria methods (dependability, credibility, transferability and authenticity) are to be implied (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

The application of dependability to the current paper lies in the fact that as the research is interpretivistic, the stories and experiences of different women entrepreneurs in Pakistan may vary to a great extent. As trustworthy researchers, the authors have taken the responsibility to attentively record “all of the changes to produce a reliable/dependable account of the emerging research focus” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 217).

Credibility in the qualitative interpretivistic research implicates that the findings presented by the authors match the intents of the interview participants (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). To ensure that the researchers have had wholesome discussions with the participants on each of the key topics instead of a simple “question-answer” format. Besides that, the authors were constantly asking additional (defining) questions to make sure that the interviewees’ responses have been understood correctly. While



interpreting the answers, the authors have made their best for their own perceptions not to interfere with the views of participants.

Transferability of the current research has been ensured by providing the reader with the complete information about the research question, design, methods, findings and interpretations (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). With the help of these measures the reader can truly understand the reality of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and the experiences they go through.

The authenticity criteria is met by proving various perceptions of the participants on the subject of the connection between family and women entrepreneurship in Pakistan. As various experiences are shared, the research “raise awareness and generate learning” on the topic (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 217).

3.7 Research ethics

As it has been specified by Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) there are four main ethical principles that the researcher should bear in mind while conducting a study: avoidance of harm, informed consent, privacy and preventing deception.

Following the rule of no harm towards the participants of the interviews the researchers have made sure that there was no “physical harm; harm to participants’ development or self-esteem; stress; harm to career prospects or future employment; and inducing subjects to perform reprehensible acts” (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019, p. 109).

As for the informed consent, all of the interviewees have been given full information about the study, its main focus and aim and have been asked if they would like to voluntarily participate in it. The participants have been informed about the techniques of the study and have given their agreement for the interviews to be recorded for the research purposes and research purposes only (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019).



As one of the key elements of the current study is family, family members and their influence, the next aspect, privacy, can be considered as a crucial part of the ethics of the current research. The authors realize that the questions related to family might be a sensitive topic, that is why the interviews have been held in the respectful manner without overshadowing personal boundaries of any of the participants. Besides that, the interviewees were given the opportunity to not answer the questions or withdraw their answers. Another important aspect that ought to be mentioned lies in the fact that all of the names and other personal details of the participants are to stay anonymous and strictly confidential.

Lastly, the researchers have followed the principle of preventing deception. All of the information that has been given to the participants of the study is true, the interviewees have not been lied to or being tricked to say or do anything. All of the findings of the research presented in the current paper are true as well.

4 Empirical data

This chapter begins with precise backgrounds of the interviewees followed by their responses in the light of the emerging themes. Initially, themes were pre-established as per the demand of the research purpose but additional themes were discovered, during the process, due to in-depth interviews and open-ended responses.

Introduction of women entrepreneurs

This section is drafted in order to introduce the entrepreneurs to the readers. In other words it can be said that these are short narratives of women entrepreneurs highlighting their entrepreneurial and familial backgrounds. Introducing them would contribute a great deal towards the analysis of their responses in the light of the aforementioned themes.



Maryam

The first interviewee of our research project is Maryam, the founder of a pharmaceutical indenting agency. She is currently married and has a two year old daughter, they all live together with the husband's parents. In her life, her mother has an important role from her upbringing till present. She leaves her daughter with her mother during her work hours. She was employed at a pharmaceutical company at first, but resigned because of not being given due incentives by her boss. The reason for that is that she was a mother then and was wrongly perceived to be occupied by her familial responsibilities. Becoming self-employed was the best decision she could make as she wanted to utilize her skills by having her own kingdom, which she has been successfully running for four years now.

Bushra

Bushra is a single parent having four children. Her eldest son was 14 and the youngest one was 9 years old when she started her own business. She used to work part-time in various tailoring shops to run her household. This made her realize that her skills allow her to have her own business. She started accepting orders from women in her neighborhood and stitched clothes for them. Her financial condition has been improving day by day, and as she continued working hard, she has managed to get her children admitted to the university and pay for their education. During this process, she was able to open her own tailoring shop, where a number of schools approached her to order school uniforms. It has been 12 years now that she is running her own business. She used to be in contact with her brothers, but they did not support her neither emotionally nor financially.

Sara

The next lady we have interviewed is Sara. Her father made her marry a man when she was a teenager. Even though they have become parents of two daughters, the marriage did not seem to go well, therefore, she has moved in



with her mother and brother and kept on working for private companies. Despite the fact that her professional position was good, Sara wanted to be independent and self-employed to contribute more time to her daughters. That is how in 2018 she opened her online business specializing in clothing. The journey was hard: at first there were no customers or profit. Facebook online streams that Sara was organizing to promote her products have only had one or two viewers. But she did not give up. After a while, things started picking up: the customers started trusting her and spreading the word about her business. The business has grown since then: now the enterprise also works with cosmetics and jewellery enabling her to hire her sister-in-law and oldest daughter to work as employees.

Mira

Mira has been married to her husband for the last 10 years, during which three beautiful children were born. As a typical Pakistani family, they live in a joint structure: with parents-in-law and the family of husband's brother. Few years ago, Mira decided to work for a company on a volunteer basis to get experience in business administration and get to know how things work. At first, husband's family supported her and assured her that it is a good thing to do. However, when Mira got busy at the company, parents-in-law didn't appreciate it, as she couldn't get as much time in the kitchen as they would want her to. The constant criticism and lack of support has resulted in the fact that when Mira has opened her own enterprise she didn't want to tell her husband's family about it. During the day she took care of the household chores that her mother-in-law put on her and during the night she dedicated four to five hours to her business. And then the cycle repeated. Mira has been managing her company that way for two years now and only recently she has disclosed to her parents-in-law that she is a business owner. Yet things got worse for her, there is no mental support from husband's family and only evidences of pressure and critique.



Ayesha

The next woman we have interviewed is also a pharmaceutical indenting agency owner. She started her business after 10 years of her marriage. She is residing with her parents-in-law, brother-in-law's family, husband and two daughters; a typical joint family system. She leaves her daughters with her mother who supports her emotionally and, to some extent, financially as well. She has no support at all from her parents-in-law and is struggling hard to run her business. She decided to become an entrepreneur to improve her financial condition and educate her daughters in private schools. She is still struggling with her business operations as the economical situation of Pakistan is not so good at present.

Sehar

Sehar is a divorced lady, who has a four year old daughter. After her separation with the ex-husband was finalized, she moved in with her parents, brothers and their respective families. Sehar used to work as a teacher in an international school, where she was earning well. However, at some point the rate of inflation has worsened the situation of employment in Pakistan, so she has decided to open her own business. She has always desired to be famous in the fashion industry as she has a good fashion sense. Her mother has, actually, been a great support for her to have her own business. It has been 3 years that she has been running her business, things are going really well and she is able to earn more as compared to what she used to earn when she was a teacher.

Rehana

Rehana was a school teacher in the Northern part of Pakistan. It was a purely rural area where children had to travel to remote areas to acquire a good level of education. There she has identified a gap and has decided to do something for the welfare of the children. Thus, she has opened her own school in that rural area which charges a minimum amount of fee. The underprivileged who



couldn't pay the fee were funded by Rehana herself. Currently she lives in a joint family system with parents-in-law, husband and three daughters. Her husband works as a government officer and earns well. Soon after she got married, she had worked as a teacher in a public school, but it has been 5 years now that she has her own school and is still running it successfully to educate the children in that particular area.

Nida

Nida is the sole owner of an online business: she sells bags and accessories of different brands. She has been married since she was 18 and now has a 15 year old daughter. Her husband is a bank manager. Nida was always passionate about running her own business and she was never restricted by her husband to work. But being a woman in a Pakistani society demands something more. Therefore, she has started her business instead of acquiring a job as her main focus was her daughter's upbringing. Another reason that pushed her towards entrepreneurship was the urge to become independent. She encountered unpredictable mood swings from her husband's side which motivated her to do something productive for her daughter and herself. She has been running her business for the past 6 years and has gained a significant amount of followers on social media platforms of her business as well.

Seema

Seema has an online retailing business. She sells cosmetics, herbal supplements and accessories. Her husband is a homeopathic doctor and earns well. They do not have children which served to be one of the reasons for her to keep herself busy. As she is not so educated, she opted to sell cosmetics online via social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. She started her business 3 years back and things are going well there. She is now able to save money for her future plans.



Tahira

Tahira is a passionate lady with immense aesthetic sense. She prepares customized gift baskets for events and is able to maintain a strong customer base in Islamabad. She has signed a contract with another woman entrepreneur who designs customized cupcakes and cakes for special occasions. This way she has expanded her product line. She started her business in 2020 when people preferred booking products online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She has been married for the past 5 years and is a mother of two sons. She is an educated lady and is always supported by her husband and father to become independent. Acquiring a job was easier for her as she is highly educated, but she has opted for entrepreneurship because of flexible timings and the urge to become self-sufficient. Her main focus was and will always be her sons and that's one of the major reasons for her to become an entrepreneur.

Farina

Farina has an online business of delivering gift baskets and gift boxes to the doorstep. She began her business in December 2021 soon after she completed her Master's Degree in Business Administration. She was formerly a teacher at an international school. International schools in Pakistan demand a significant amount of time and effort from their teachers. Because of the economical situation in Pakistan, teachers were not given their due annual increments which highly demotivated them. Farina was greatly influenced by her mother who also was an educated lady. Thus, she has decided to have her own business through which she can be more self-sufficient and can earn three times more as compared to her previous occupation. She is currently residing with her mother and brother. Her brother is working in a multinational company and is earning really well. They emotionally support each other and prove to have an intense bond in both good or bad times.



Saeeda

Saeeda is an educated and passionate lady who is the sole owner of an online customized clothing business. She designs clothing for her customers as per their choices and interests. She has a strong customer base and is still managing to enhance her network. She lives with her mother-in-law, husband and a daughter. She started her own business, because she wanted to be a business woman and a perfect lady in the house at the same time. Her mother-in-law has never gone to school but was highly supportive to her daughter-in-law. Saeeda's husband is a well known businessman in the community, but, unfortunately, has recently faced downfall due to the economic crisis. Saeeda's business has helped him a great deal to maintain household expenditures and their child's school fee. Initially, Saeeda's business was set up to follow her dreams but later on it proved instrumental to support her whole family.

4.1 Reasons for being an entrepreneur

Most of the women shared a number of reasons and factors that have motivated them to be entrepreneurs. Some of them talked about having their own businesses where they could operate according to their interests.

“This is what I wanted to be! I wanted to have my own kingdom” (Sehar).

Whereas in most of the cases, the need for earning more along with flexibility in timings has been observed:

“My daughter is admitted to an expensive international school. My husband cannot afford to manage electricity bills, house rent and grocery at the same time. Being a mother of a child, I need to make sure that I do not miss out on anything on my child's grooming [...], so working 9 to 6 was never a good option for me” (Nida).

Similarly, Seema has expressed her opinion regarding choosing self-employment over being employed by someone by saying:



“Nobody is my boss. I am not accountable to anyone. I have my own strategies to make profit”.

On the other hand, there was an interesting area discovered from the response of one of the women entrepreneurs stating:

“My boss knew that I was married and that I was a mother. He presumed me to be careless towards my job because I had to do a lot more to drain myself at home. He believed that I would resign from the job soon as I was bound by my familial responsibilities. I was deprived from getting my yearly incentive on the basis of this lame excuse [...] I had gained a lot of experience in this field and, thus, decided to have my own business” (Maryam).

Most of the participants have talked about becoming financially stable by choosing the path of entrepreneurship (Bushra, Mira, Ayesha, Sehar and Nida). However, one of the respondents (to be more precise, Sara) has mentioned that originally the idea of opening her own business did not cross her mind. At some point she has decided to be an entrepreneur as she thought it would give her the feeling of independence, self-sufficiency and drive in life:

“Before I started my business, it was not that I really was in need of it, but I started it, because I wanted to be independent, earn for myself and my kids, be supportive to my family. It was not that my family really needed my money or my earnings. I started, because I wanted to do something and I always worked, so I didn’t want to just sit at home and waste time”.

Similarly, another entrepreneur supported this idea and her area of interest by stating:

“My husband is a homeopathic doctor, who stays busy all day [...] I do not have children and I am not that educated and qualified to get a job. I availed this opportunity of selling what I was familiar with, cosmetics, and decided to run it all on my own” (Seema).

In addition to this, Bushra has highlighted this fact related to education and unemployment by claiming that she didn’t have any source of income to raise her children and was not eligible to find a job with a good salary package:



“That’s why I decided to do what I was good at: use my skills and spread the word”
(Bushra).

Alternatively, importance of women entrepreneurship for the economy, was a unique point discussed by one of the respondents:

“My self satisfaction does matter. We [women] are more than 50% of the Pakistani economy and we need to realize that we are active contributors to our economy. We just cannot end up doing nothing” (Ayesha).

Besides that, another respondent has discussed economic growth not only in terms of finances, but in regard of contributing towards societal development:

“I was previously a teacher and I was very interested in educating children, especially girls. I realized the fact that in the Northern part of Pakistan there is a strong need for education [...] it was a rural area with no school, and it was difficult for the kids to travel by bus or by foot to other places for education” (Rehana).

Another interesting opinion the researchers came across was the motivational aspect that has led them to become entrepreneurs:

“I want to be a role model for my daughters. I want them to follow their dreams and do whatever they wish to” (Ayesha).

Similarly, Rehana has supported the point of view of Ayesha by saying:

“Being a woman, I wanted to set an example for other ladies that they can be more than just a wife, mother or daughter-in-law”.

At the same time Sehar has stated the fact that business involves choice and interests. She further added that she wanted to be “famous and known” in the market of fashion designing, which has motivated her to have her own business.

Farina has shared an interesting reason for her to set up her own business:

“The main reason [...] is the rise of inflation. I used to be a professional teacher at school. No matter how much dedication and hardwork I put into my work, my salary was still low as compared to my working hours. I was not self-satisfied.



That's why I quit my job and decided to have my home-based business via social media platform. Now I earn three times more than I was earning as a teacher".

Inflation has spread like fire across the globe and this can be evidenced by common responses of most of the interviewees. Tahira has stated the following fact:

"My husband's income was really low. He could hardly save any money after paying the bills and house rent".

Similarly, Saeeda talked about inflation and its impact on the economy by saying:

"Although my husband has his own business [...], I still wanted to open mine, because I wanted to be his support in hard times and I am glad to say that I am supporting him now when he is suffering financial loss".

As a conclusion, it can be said that a number of reasons emerged from the responses of the interviewees to become entrepreneurs. For instance, self-satisfaction, having their own kingdom, independence, financial sufficiency and so forth. Reasons have varied as the interviews progressed, but at the end almost all of the women has highlighted the role of inner satisfaction in it.

4.2 Gender assigned roles

4.2.1 "Breadwinner" and "homemaker"

Throughout the interviews, the idea of gender-biased roles continued coming up in various manifestations. Family and societal pressures kept revolving around the opinions of different entrepreneurs. The terminologies "breadwinner" and "homemaker" echoed as there could be a commonality seen in the responses of certain entrepreneurs. For instance, Maryam has emphasized on the fact of women being the "homemakers" by stating:

"I am responsible to take care of the household [...], to educate my daughter and work on her self-grooming. It is me who is supposed to do this and I have grown up seeing this [...]".



Similarly, Mira, Ayesha and Nida supported this idea of being “homemakers” by claiming that what they do is actually what society wants them to. While on the contrary, an interesting view emerged:

“[...] I was both “breadwinner” and “homemaker” at the same time: I have always worked really hard for my family. We actually contribute: my brother is the head of the family and whatever he earns, he budgets it out for the family and I contribute all the time, whatever I can, I do that [...]. In the whole family we contribute equally and we try to budget out equally our income, expenses and everything. That’s how we are running a good family budget” (Sara).

While interviewing Rehana, similar response was witnessed with an idea of sharing responsibilities equally:

“In our family, all men and women are working. They take care of the household and move out to earn at the same time. We, together, have to make sure that we do not miss out on our daughters’ upbringing and go hand-in-hand with our house and family setup. I contribute when he is out of finances and vice versa. When I am not at home, he makes sure to be there with our daughters [...], feed them and help them with their school reinforcement tasks. We take care of our children equally”.

Additionally, Ayesha said that dividing up joint expenditures proportionally was an ideal approach to guarantee that each person has a reasonable sum of money left over for personal saving:

“As I work and he works too, I pay for the groceries and our daughters’ school fee, whereas he pays for the electricity bills and fuel. This is how we save some money individually every month”.

Bushra, on the other hand, has stated:

“I am a single parent. I have no financial backing. Therefore, I am the provider and lady of the house at the same time”.

Similarly, Sehar shared that since she has divorced her husband, she has been a single mother, which makes her provide her daughter with clothes, food and shelter all on her own.



Seema shared an important point by stating that she started her business because she didn't have anything to do. But her business enabled her to manage financial budget and provide additional financial support to her husband. In other words, it can be said that entrepreneurship made her eligible to be her husband's right hand.

At the same time the story presented by Farina has a different perception on the "breadwinner" and "homemaker" of the family. The woman has nothing against providing additional income to her family, however, at the current moment it does not seem possible:

"Since my business is setting up its roots, I am still not eligible to support my family financially. Thus, my brother provides the money that we need to live on".

Whereas, Saeeda had an interesting fact to share:

"When my husband was earning well, he was the "breadwinner", but, as his business is seeing hard times these days [...], I pay for the groceries and the utility bills. My mother-in-law is the one who is a "homemaker" right now".

To sum up, women entrepreneurs presented different views and objectives on the concept of being a "breadwinner" or a "homemaker" of the family. But, these two concepts will be revisited and coincide with other themes later on in the current script.

4.2.2 Emotional support

The fact that emotional support is one of the key motivational factors to have a business has been shared by all of the interviewed entrepreneurs. Maryam has emphasized on the importance of having emotional support by considering her spouse to play an essential part in this initiative:

"It is my husband who [...] had always encouraged me to take this step. He ignored everything my parents-in-law have said as they have never supported me and will never do so in future as well. They say that my job is to be at home".



Similarly, Mira shared the situation at her place by highlighting the fact that her parents-in-law were never supportive and the emotional assistance comes only from spouse and her parents. Furthermore, Ayesha opened up by saying:

“My mother has supported me emotionally and mentally. My parents-in-law only wanted me to be a home-maker and compromise on my personal expenditures”.

On the other hand, Saeeda claimed that her mother-in-law was extremely supportive in terms of finances as well:

“That is because she knew that I will be a huge support to her son eventually in future”.

One of the responses evidenced an interesting fact that to become an entrepreneur, one needs to have self-motivation and self-confidence to take this initiative. In some cases, external support and extrinsic motivation hardly matters. It is the need and the unfavorable circumstances that leads you to take decisions:

“My brothers never supported me emotionally as I was a single parent.. they had the fear of taking up the responsibility of my children. That's why they backed off. I, myself, have always and will always provide emotional support to my children [...] I was motivated by myself” (Bushra).

Whereas in some families (Sara, Saeeda and Farina), all the family members seem to be emotional and have each other's back, for almost all the decisions, in order to maintain a healthy environment.

In most of the cases, there was a commonality in the responses observed: family of origin supporting the most (Maryam, Sara, Mira, Ayesha, Sehar and Farina). As a result, it can be stated that families of origin may serve to be a major source of motivation for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

4.2.3 Experience of being a wife within a Pakistani society

In Pakistani society, a woman's independence and freedom to make her own decisions — whether to work, get an education, get married, get divorced,



have children, or not — variously depend on the attitude of her spouse or her nearest man figure. The majority of household tasks are done by women as housewives. One of the interviewees has shared her opinion in the light of her personal experience as a wife:

“We are muslims and muslim wives are always faithful and obedient, they try to obey their husbands and try to take care of their home, family, children and husband” (Mira).

The dilemma observed in Pakistani society is that women, when they fail to meet with the expectations of her parents-in-law and/or society, eventually encounter divorce or separation from their spouses. This can be evidenced by noting down the responses of two of the entrepreneurs who are currently divorced:

“Me as a wife, I tried my best, whatever I could, but sometimes things don’t work out the way you think they should [...]. Maybe our society expects too much from us. I have always played out being a mother and, as a wife, I tried my best, but it didn’t work out” (Sara).

Similarly, Sehar has quoted the fact:

“My parents-in-law and the societal customs have forced me to be in a shell. My husband ultimately laid the same pressure on me that consequently has led to our divorce”.

There are women who are not satisfied in their marital relationships but, unfortunately, decide to live with their spouses for the sake of their children:

“I wanted to be independent as I did not want to be accountable for even a small damage or a petty loss [...], he stops me from spending much and keeps an eye on whatsoever he has given me [...]. But that’s not all for me!” (Nida).

Whereas, in most of the cases (Maryam, Mira, Rehana, Seema, Tahira and Saeeda), a common trend has been observed that has shown that support from spouses was a key motivational aspect for women to run their businesses. However, an interesting view emerged when Ayesha has revealed:



“This role is challenging! [...] When you get married, it’s the family you’re married to, not only your husband. It took me 10 years to convince him [to let me open my business]. My husband is a part of society, so he also has the same mindset. He is supportive, but only to some extent. He wants me to be a superwoman: to take care of the house and the work outside at the same time”.

Similarly, Maryam has shared that her spouse has always supported her in all her endeavors, but when he got pressured by his parents, it was hard for her to convince him once again that entrepreneurship is something positive.

To sum up, it can be stated that spouse’s support contributes a great deal towards encouraging women entrepreneurs to operate their businesses, however, the burden of societal norms and traditions make their paths difficult.

4.2.4 Decision making within the family

The predominantly patriarchal society of Pakistan is rife with instances of “inferiority and superiority”. This enables men to be viewed as lording over, the only provider for the family, and the decision maker as well. But women are oftenly trapped in a patriarchal culture where they have little control over their personal and family lives. This fact can be evidenced in the response of Maryam:

“My husband was not ready to allow me to work or to have a job initially after marriage. My father-in-law didn’t like women working out of their homes. For him, the woman is the “homemaker” and the man of the family is the one who moves out to earn and brings money home, so he should make decisions”.

Furthermore, Ayesha has shared with her husband that she would like to become an entrepreneur, however, he replied that it has to be approved by his father, Ayesha’s father-in-law. Similar responses were received from some of the entrepreneurs (Mira and Rehana). Whereas, an interesting response was presented by Sara:



“It’s not like only one person in the family who decides what to do, we together share and discuss our decisions, whatever we want to do and whatever is important for the family”.

While on the other hand, Nida is largely dependent on her husband’s decisions:

“Being a wife in Pakistani society means you have to fit in certain roles that family, society and husband expect you to perform. Although I am much more educated than he is [...], I cannot take even a single step without his permission. He is the final authority and final decision is always taken from his consent”.

However, in a few cases (Sehar and Farina), there was a slight change in the aforementioned trend. In their families, the final decision was presented by the elderly women of the family such as mothers. These situations contradict the image of Pakistani society which is considered to be largely patriarchal.

There are situations when women seek ideas from the males of their families to ensure stability through their approvals. For instance, Seema has confidently claimed that she takes all her decisions after discussing with her husband:

“We [...] mutually agree to do whatever we want to in our life. We never discuss our affairs with anyone beyond the four walls of our house”.

Similarly, Tahira stated that she has blind faith in her husband and takes him to be the well-wisher of the entire family. It could be observed from their (Seema’s and Tahira’s) responses that they grant the right of decision making to their husbands as they are more exposed and experienced in terms of the public domain. In other words, men have more public dealings and market knowledge which help them in efficient decision making.

To sum up, it can be said that there is no noticeable common trend being followed in different families of Pakistan when it comes to decision making. In some cases, elderly men of the family are the decision makers while in few of the cases, elderly women are doing the same job. However, in few of



the families women have undoubted confidence in their men to guide them and make decisions.

4.3 Financial and educational background of the family

Family background, in this research, is determined by the financial and educational background of the family. Finances involved in entrepreneurial ventures are of dire importance. Enquiring about the financial background of the women entrepreneurs was a theme that evolved due to certain responses acquired and the literature findings on the topic. For some of the entrepreneurs, as mentioned earlier (in section 4.1), improvising financial conditions was the primary objective through having their own businesses. Similarly, educational background is also an important aspect which cannot be ignored.

Most of the entrepreneurs claimed that they belonged to the mediocre class of the society, but had a strong educational background. For instance, Maryam stated:

“My father-in-law is a retired bank manager [...]. I started my business with my savings from my previous job. I did not bother my parents-in-law or my husband to support me financially, as we belong to the mediocre class. My father-in-law is a university graduate, husband and I are post graduates and my mother-in-law is a high school graduate[...], but educational background hardly matters in my case”.

Similarly, Bushra has shared an interesting aspect:

“I am a high school graduate [...]. Education is central in our family. That’s why I wanted my children to acquire the highest level of education. We belonged to a lower middle class, but my business has upgraded our level”.

But there were cases, which turned our discussion to a new point of improving lifestyles through entrepreneurship:

“Financially we are stable. We all are highly educated. Whatever we earn, we just spend. And we believe in having good life, having fun. I could say we are a middle class family, but still we earn well and we are blessed in every way” (Sara).



Moreover, Mira has shared another interesting view:

“I belong to a very well-educated family, education is very important to us. And we are doing the same with our children. Our expenses are extremely limited. I teach my children at home and we don’t have the opportunity to buy new clothes all the time. I just spend money in the way of God and the rest I put into savings”.

Ayesha, has laid immense emphasis on education as central in her life by saying:

“My husband and I are post graduates. For me, educating my daughters is the primary purpose of my life. I want them to study in international schools. My mother-in-law has never been to school and my father-in-law is a retired flight attendant, therefore, they do not realize the pain I take to educate my daughters. Secondly, we belong to a mediocre class and we are born to compromise. But I cannot do that for the sake of my daughters”.

Similarly, Nida has shared the fact that as she was a post graduate from a renowned institute of Pakistan, she could never think of compromising on her children’s education.

There were certain cases (Sehar and Rehana), where all the family members were highly educated and earning all on their own. Opting for entrepreneurship was their personal choices and self-satisfaction.

Another aspect that has been brought up lies in the assumption that lack of education might lead to unemployment. This fact was highlighted by Seema:

“I am not so educated. My husband is a homeopathic doctor. I knew I would never get a job. But, I wanted to earn, so I opened my business”.

Farina’s story is quite different: the lady has shared that her mother was also an educated lady and she had spent a significant sum of money to provide education for her children. This entails the importance of education in her family.

Whereas an interesting response from Saeeda has added another point to the discussion:



”We both are highly educated, we cannot compromise on our daughter’s education. My mother-in-law has never been to school and that’s one of the reasons why she supports me to have my own business and educate my daughter as much as possible”.

To sum up, entrepreneurs from affluent families are more inclined to seek opportunity entrepreneurship, whilst those from less fortunate backgrounds are more likely to be driven by need. But to some extent, cultural and societal patterns seem to coincide with the educational and financial background of the family, differing it from what it actually should look like.

4.4 Children in the household

As mentioned earlier (Section 2.2.3), the distinctiveness of being a mumpreneur is about combining and, more importantly, balancing work and life, having a sense of accomplishment and happiness with oneself, growing money, obtaining respect to equalize gender imbalance and becoming independent (Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012). For some entrepreneurs (Maryam, Bushra, Mira, Ayesha, Sehar) motherhood itself is one reason to be who they are at the present moment. Yet there have been certain variations found in their responses. For instance, Maryam has stated:

“My daughter is everything for me [...] She is my strength and I want to provide her with the best”.

Similarly, Ayesha has highlighted that although she was emotionally supported by her parents-in-law, she has considered her daughters to be the main strength and the biggest motivation to become an entrepreneur:

“I want to be a role model for my daughters. I want to educate them that sky is the limit”.

Whereas in the case of Bushra, it could be observed that, as a single parent, she alone has taken up the responsibility of her children alone and has not been provided with any external help. She had to follow a flexible time schedule for work to ensure equal attention to her children.



Similarly, Mira being a mother and entrepreneur at the same time stated:

“I worked when my children went to school [...] or after they slept at night. But household chores are never ending!. I seemed to be drained every night. School reinforcement tasks, cooking, laundry [...] all at the same time!”

Whereas, Rehana has shared an interesting view highlighting the importance of spouse’s support in upbringing the children:

“I get worried at times as I have to raise my daughters [...]. I know bringing up children is really challenging, but my husband and I play a 50-50 role in this”.

Sara, on the other hand, had an interesting view to share:

“For bringing up my own kids, I had to struggle. I have worked hard for them and provided them [according to] what their needs were and whatever their ambitions were. I tried my best to be a good mother and a good parent. I made sure that I do something that doesn’t disturb their lives”.

Saeeda has described her situation while discussing about being a mother and an entrepreneur at the same time:

“It is really challenging for me to pay attention to my daughter and work at the same time. I have so many roles to take-up; mother, wife and a daughter-in-law [...] I am not able to give my best to all the responsibilities associated with these roles”.

Similarly, Nida shared that she neglects herself when she tries to perform all the societal roles associated with her along with the entrepreneurial role:

“After becoming a mother I was so occupied for so many years. I chose to work during the day as my daughter was not at home because when she comes back, I want to be the best for her. But as my daughter grew up, I started having anxiety issues”.

Tahira has highlighted the challenging parts of being a parent as well:

“To be honest, it becomes difficult sometimes. Kids have their own mood, tantrums and commitments. And it gets hard for parents too”.



To summarize the provided responses, some entrepreneurs consider their children to be the only motivation to start their business while some share it to be a great challenge to balance their work and family life.

4.5 Attitude of the spouse and his family

It has been of great pleasure for us, as researchers, to have noticed that the majority of the women the interviewees have been conducted with (Tahira, Seema, Maryam, Ayesha, Rehana, Mira, Sara, Saeeda) have experienced significant support from their husbands. To give an example, Tahira has pointed out the following:

“Thanks to God, as I live separately, I am blessed and my experience has been great so far. My husband supported me and still is supporting me, as he understands that buying items and exploring the market for desired products is not easy and I need his assistance. I have managed to gather a good client base and my family members admire me for being the first businesswoman of the house”.

Similarly, Seema’s spouse has shown a positive attitude towards her entrepreneurial ambitions as well:

“My husband is very supportive of me. He is happy that I have involved myself in something fruitful as having no children causes a feeling of emptiness and depression in me”.

However, it would be fair to notice that not always the support of parents-in-law has been present for Pakistani women. Sadly, the most “popular” scenario that has been noticed in the current study looks like this: husband supports and encourages the wife, while his parents criticize her.

“My husband has always supported me. He always wanted me to do what I wanted to but at times he had mood swings because of his family. His parents never wanted me to have my own business. He then used to ask me to come home earlier just to make his parents happy by serving food on time. They do not know what is going on in here (pointing towards her head)..they just want their meals on time” (Maryam).



The importance of the household responsibilities has also been mentioned by Ayesha and Rehana:

“My husband loves me a lot. He has confidence in me. But the fact that it took me 10 years of our marriage to convince him to have my own business is unforgettable. Besides that, his parents want me to stay home and compromise on my personal expenses. They expect me to perform household chores at the same time” (Ayesha).

Here is the experience of Rehana:

“No matter how much support you get from your husband, there comes a point when society and your parents-in-law remind you of you being a woman. A faithful woman who stays at home, adjusts her living standards according to what her husband earns, takes care of the kids and household at the same time. They say “it was your choice, not ours!”.

Yet, the story of Mira has reached a new level in the absence of emotional support from the side of husband’s family. When Mira first decided to have a full time job, her parents-in-law showed great encouragement towards this initiative. However, as they later on realized that Mira can not spend as much time in the kitchen, as they wanted her to, they got upset. Moreover, they have been unhappy that she is not sharing any of her earnings with them, even though her job had a volunteer basis and she was not earning anything from it:

“When I was working with clients before, I was not earning any money, but my family members thought the opposite. And at that time I was not making a penny. So I have decided that when I open a business, I should never ever tell them, so that they don’t think I am making a fortune” (Mira).

And that is exactly what happened. Mira has been running her enterprise for two years now, however, husband’s family still do not know about it. Here is how Mira describes the double job of household and business:

“I wanted to work on my business when my kids go to school. But that was not possible as when they did, my mother-in-law asked me to perform a number of household chores such as cooking, cleaning, washing dishes, laundry, etc., which in total took around 2 to 3 hours. For that I used to work at night for 4 to 5 hours to overcome the time loss. And the next day the cycle repeated! Even after all this, the



most painful fact was that I was being taunted by my mother-in-law that I do not take interest in my household chores and I keep sleeping all day”.

The only two women who has specified the support from both the partner and his parents were Sara and Saeeda:

“[It] is a very advanced age now, everybody’s working, I think my parents or parents-in-law would have never stopped me [from being an entrepreneur]. Everybody likes their daughters and daughters-in-law to be independent” (Sara).

Saeeda has also had a great experience when it comes to parents-in-law, in her case, especially with the husband’s mother:

“My husband is really supportive when it comes to any matter related to my business. Also my mother-in-law is an exceptional lady who has assisted me financially as well and takes care of my daughter when I'm not around. She wants me to do what she couldn't when she was of my age”.

4.6 Family of origin

The term "family of origin" refers to the main caregivers and siblings that a person grows up with, as well as the initial social group to which a person belonged. This family is frequently a person's biological family or an adopted family (Hemming, Blackmer and Searight, 2012). There are a few of the entrepreneurs who are living with their families, but have a different family structure. Two of the entrepreneurs (Sara and Sehar) are residing with their families of origin as they are divorced. In the Pakistani society, women, after getting divorced mostly live with their parents or siblings, but if a woman is self-sufficient to feed her children all on her own, she may choose to live independently (as it has happened in Bushra’s case). Most of the women, although married, talked a lot about emotional and financial support from their parents. Therefore, it is important to consider this familial aspect as well. Family of origin, in this research, is determined by parents and siblings in the family.



4.6.1 Parents

While asking women about emotional, as well as financial support that they have received on their way to become entrepreneurs, many women have emphasized that their parents have played a vital part in that process. Ayesha's case is quite interchangeable to Maryam's experience. For instance, Maryam has emphasized the importance of her mother's support throughout the interview:

“My daughter stays with my mother when I am at work. She feeds her and provides her with whatever she wants to have [...] My parents-in-law hardly know what I go through everyday. Whenever I am down, my mum cheers me up and motivates me to be focused. Without her I wouldn't have been the person I am today”.

Similarly, Mira shared that her parents have always motivated her to do something productive and achieve her goals:

“As for the emotional support, 80% credit goes to my parents, especially my mum, she supported me in becoming an entrepreneur to a great extent. She always told me that I can do it. I can not describe it any better: if it wasn't for her support, I wouldn't be an entrepreneur right now”.

Furthermore, Tahira has highlighted her father's wish to see her as an entrepreneur:

“My father has always dreamed for me to be an independent woman. So my parents supported me”.

Whereas, in cases where women were divorced or unmarried, they solely talked about how their parents motivated them to be entrepreneurs:

“My mother has supported me emotionally and financially[...] I have a daughter and my mother always wanted me to be self-sufficient for my daughter. She helped me in following my dreams and she actually made it [my business] happen” (Sehar).

Similarly, Farina shared that her mother has spent a significant amount of money on her education and she wanted her daughter and son to do something to be independent.



On the other hand, a new idea emerged which has reflected on the bitter reality of the Pakistani society:

“My parents and my brothers have blamed me for divorcing my husband. They didn’t want me to be a burden for them. That’s why I made use of my savings and arranged my own independent shelter to raise my children” (Bushra).

To sum up, it can be observed that parents of women entrepreneurs seem to be really supportive in Pakistani society, however, there may be a possibility where no support could be seen from their side as in Bushra’s case.

4.6.2 Siblings

Not only in childhood but throughout one's lifetime, sibling bonds are emotionally intense and vital. In cases where women entrepreneurs did or did not have parents, they talked a lot about their siblings too. Their responses could not be neglected, as their siblings have played an important part in their ventures. In the beginning, questions were mostly concerned about family structure, but the discussion was built up over time when the women entrepreneurs discussed their siblings along with their parents.

For instance, Sara has quoted the fact that as she was divorced she has resided with her brother, his wife and children. She has stated:

“We emotionally support each other in good times and hard times. We have great bonding with each other, we have great understanding with each other, it’s really nice to have such wonderful family members [...]. My brother is supportive of me and I try to be emotionally supportive of him in any way I can”.

Similarly, Sehar has shared the fact that her brothers were highly educated and had really good jobs. They have supported her in this venture and ensured to support her financially as well, if there would be a need for this at some point. Moreover, Farina and her brother have been motivated by their mother, but their relationship and support level could be judged by what she has shared:



“We didn’t have enough finances, we were supposed to mold our ideas according to the investments we had. My brother had his own job and I had my savings but he supported me at every step by ensuring that he had utmost confidence in me”.

While on the other hand, Bushra’s situation took a turning point in the discussion:

“My brothers and my parents kept on blaming me for the divorce, their moods were so obvious to understand that I have 0% support from their side...”.

Support from family has been a vital source of motivation for women entrepreneurs. It could be reflected from their voice intonation and expression. The greater the familial support is, the greater the level of satisfaction is and the easier the whole process for them is. But Bushra’s case gives an indication that stereotypical mindset and societal control does contribute to influencing the family system.

5 Analysis and Discussion

The current chapter consists of an analysis and discussion of the empirical material presented in the previous chapter together with the usage of literature on the topic presented earlier. Each subchapter finishes with the short conclusion of the discussed theme.

5.1 Reasons for being an entrepreneur

As it was more thoroughly explained in the literature review (section 2.1.1, “Defining entrepreneurship”), prior studies on the character traits and related theoretical perspectives have contributed a great deal towards describing entrepreneurs. According to Littunen (2000), the entrepreneur's motivation is probably impacted by their educational background and the resources that they have control over, in addition to being largely the outcome of the experience. One of the factors that goes into the entrepreneur's purpose and principles is this. Alternatively, it might be seen as the forces that push the entrepreneur closer to his or her goals or cause them to fade away.



On revisiting the empirical evidences acquired through the responses of the women entrepreneurs, commonalities in their perspectives proved the fact that they earnestly aimed at utilizing their educational qualification and made use of the limited resources they had to have their own businesses (e.g. Sara, Mira, Ayesha, Sehar, Nida and Farina) . On the contrary, there were cases in which women were not so educated and had a firm belief of not being able to get a job. It has forced them to push themselves to become entrepreneurs (as in Bushra's and Seema's stories). These two women had limited financial resources and a narrow social network as well. Irrespective of this limitation, they focused on doing something fruitful rather than sitting idle without doing anything.

In the words of Casson (1982, p. 295), "[...]the ability to take risks, innovativeness, knowledge of how the market functions, manufacturing know-how, marketing skills, business management skills, and the ability to cooperate" are the characteristics that make up an entrepreneur. To put it another way, one could say that entrepreneurs are those who are ready to take risks, have the ability to see business opportunities, are able to correct errors, and can exploit lucrative opportunities.

Considering the empirical material gained from the responses of the entrepreneurs, it was evaluated that almost all of the 12 women were risk-takers. Some had to take risks by investing the limited financial resources they had (Bushra, Sara, Mira, Ayesha, Sehar, Nida and Farina), while some had to arrange finances from somebody or somewhere else. For instance, Maryam had to acquire a bank loan to start her own business, even though she was uncertain about the ability to pay off the debt in future. Since she was not financially supported by her husband or family, the risk was all taken by herself. Similarly, considering Saeeda's example, it was found out that she had to invest all her savings along with her mother-in-law's, which has involved an uncertainty of whether the business would eventually flourish or not. Campbell (1992) has as well shared a similar view (presented in section 2.1.2) regarding entrepreneurs being potential risk-takers.



Touching the aspect of “having knowledge about the market” from the definition of Casson (1982), it can be evidenced from the perspectives of different women entrepreneurs interviewed. For instance, Maryam, before starting her own pharmaceutical indenting company, worked for years in the same industry. She had immense knowledge about the demands and networks involved in the pharmaceutical world. For her it was the right decision to utilize her expertise and past knowledge to have a company of her own. Similarly, Ayesha has also worked in a health based company for years, which has provided her with immense knowledge and practice about the supplying and retailing systems involved in this particular field. Another woman that “falls” in this category is Sara, who has had a work experience of about more than 9 years and had an exposure to the corporate world.

Whereas, Mira has aimed at gaining knowledge before starting her own business. She has volunteered in a company, just to get a know-how of the way the corporate world looks like. Later on she has utilized her knowledge to have her own company. This example can be strongly related to the “willingness to learn and achieve” perspective of entrepreneurship. Considering the thoughts shared by almost all the entrepreneurs, the fact that entrepreneurship involves risks, cannot be disregarded.

According to Rotter (1990), the environment in which the person lives, their experiences, and changes all have a significant impact on this process. Furthermore, it might be argued that establishing a business can cause a significant enough change in one's life to affect their personality. This draws attention towards Rehana’s case, who is presently residing in the Northern part of Pakistan and has set up her own school. She has identified the “need” to have her own educational institution as children there had to move to remote areas to acquire education. In other words, it can be said that the environment she was a part of has influenced her greatly to make this decision. Similarly, in Maryam’s case, her work place environment was not rewarding her the incentives that she deserved to have for a certain period of time. This “pushed” her to make this big decision in her life.



According to McClelland's (1961) theory, individuals with a strong desire for success are among those who plan ahead to solve problems on their own, set objectives, and strive arduously to achieve these goals. Furthermore, those who have a strong desire for success often decide to start their own businesses and succeed in doing so better than others.

Having considered this perspective of McClelland, it can be noticed that in almost all of the cases, the main reason to become entrepreneurs was the urge of becoming successful. Success can be measured in terms of fame, financial stability or creating a change. This fact can be reflected upon by analyzing different perspectives of women interviewed. For instance, Sehar's desire of becoming famous in the fashion world to Bushra's objective of having financial stability, all mirror the concept of being successful with the help of entrepreneurship. Some desire to enhance their network (e.g. Seema and Sara), while some (e.g. Saeeda, Nida, Farina and Tahira) aim to objectify self-satisfaction. These experiences put light on the "internal locus of control", in which one is responsible for the actions he or she takes. For instance, most of the women entrepreneurs (Sehar, Sara, Saeeda, Farina and Rehana) have talked about their personal choices and interests to become entrepreneurs. Similarly, as mentioned in section 2.1.2 of the literature review, a number of researchers have highlighted the "need for achievement" as a significant entrepreneurial trait (Churchill and Lewis, 1986; Shaver and Scott, 1991).

In addition, the "push" theory contends that adverse outside influences such as dissatisfaction with one's existing position, difficulty finding employment, a poor salary, or strict work schedules force people to establish their own businesses (Gilad and Levine, 1986). This fact can be noticed on revisiting the responses of few of the entrepreneurs talking about the unpleasant work-place environment and in-sufficient salary (Maryam, Ayesha and Farina) leading them to have their own businesses. Flexible working hours is a factor, which is mentioned by most all of the mumpreneurs (Maryam, Bushra, Sara, Mira, Ayesha, Nida, Tahira and Saeeda). While Seema and



Bushra highlighted an interesting fact that they were not so educated and they knew that it was hard for them to find a good job, they have decided to do something they were really good at. Thus, in all these cases “push” factors greatly contribute towards making these women entrepreneurs.

On the other hand, both “pull” factors take the limelight while analyzing the responses of few of the entrepreneurs. For instance, Sehar has clearly stated that she wanted “self-satisfaction to have her own kingdom”. Similarly, in some cases both “pull” and “push” factors intersect. For instance, almost all of the entrepreneurs have talked about “independence, prosperity and self satisfaction” (Gilad and Levine, 1986).

Thus, the empirical evidence in this research contradicts the idea of people becoming entrepreneurs more often as a result of "pull" forces than "push" reasons (Keeble, Bryson and Wood, 1992; Orhan and Scott, 2001), as it can be observed that the responses touch both the aspects of “push” and “pull” factors.

Moreover, there is evidence in the literature that more women than men launch firms as a result of necessity (Kelley, Singer and Herrington, 2012). According to certain research studies, women entrepreneurs often decide to start-up their firms as a second or third job, mostly for the matter of earning additional money (Pandey and Ansari, 2016). Having considered the empirical evidence acquired, it can also be stated that most of the women entrepreneurs (Bushra, Sara, Mira, Ayesha, Sehar, Nida, Seema, Tahira and Farina) were necessity driven. All these women clearly stated that the major reason for becoming entrepreneurs was financial stability.

To sum up, by combining the existing research with the empirical evidence acquired, it can be stated that entrepreneurial traits, internal locus of control, need for achievement in terms of financial stability, fame, independence, push and pull factors, all contribute towards the entrepreneurial decision making process.



5.2 Gender assigned roles

5.2.1 “Breadwinner” and “Homemaker”

As it has been described in a more detailed way in the literature review (section 2.2.1, “Gender assigned roles”), the previous research on the topic tends to draw a precise line between the roles of “breadwinner” and “homemaker” of the family. Various authors (Hussain, et al., 2015; Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012; Roomi and Parrott, 2008; Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006) specify that these roles and followed by them responsibilities are strictly related to the concept of gender. By that it is usually meant that a man is portrayed as the one “having a job” and providing the family financially, while a woman is taking care of children, parents-in-law and household chores.

Even though such a perception seems to be rather realistic in theory, as Pakistan is a patriarchal society, the evidence found in the current research does not fully confirm that. The analysis of responses has shown that despite the fact that theory strictly divides man’s and woman’s responsibilities in the house, the reality represents a more complicated situation. A detailed summary have been transcribed into the following table:

“Homemaker”	“Breadwinner”
- Maryam - Nida - Farina (can not provide for her family at the moment)	
- Bushra, Sara, Sehar (single parents) - Rehana, Ayesha (divide responsibilities with husbands) - Mira, Tahira, Seema (do the double job of “homemaker” and “breadwinner”)	
	- Saeeda (mother-in-law is the homemaker right now)

Table 2 - The distribution of “homemaker” and “breadwinner” roles in the household.



As it can be vividly seen from the table, the theoretical perception provided by previous researchers (Hussain, et al., 2015; Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012; Roomi and Parrott, 2008; Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006) has been correct in the matter that women more oftenly take the role of the “homemaker” being responsible for family members and place of living. Out of 12 ladies who have participated in the current study, 11 of them have stated that they are being the “homemakers” on a daily basis.

Looking at the “breadwinner” part of the table, it can be said that nine respondents are playing a distinctive role in supporting their families financially, paying bills, buying groceries and covering the fees for children’s education. These facts lead to the conclusion that eight women have a “double job” of providing for the family and being a caring wife/mother/daughter-in-law at the same time. For sure, the current study is strictly limited by the number of participants, however, transcribing these answers to the percentages, it becomes clear that 66,6% of interviewed women are being the “breadwinner” and the “homemaker” at the same time.

Another interesting discovery lies in the fact that out of all respondents, only one lady (Saeeda) has stated that does not do household chores right now, instead her mother-in-law is helping. The situation is this way right now, as her husband’s business is unwell at the current moment and financial assistance almost completely depends on the earnings of Saeeda.

As a short conclusion, it can be said that women in fact are strongly connected to the role of “homemaker” and do take care of many family-related aspects. However, the same verdict can not be made in terms of “breadwinner”: it is hard to say that men are the only members of the family, who bring the money, as in many viewed cases women contribute as well, which leads to the presence of “double job” for Pakistani women entrepreneurs.



5.2.2 Emotional support

The theory on the topic has highlighted that one of the main responsibilities of a woman within a Pakistani society is to provide emotional support to her family members, especially to children (Hussain, et al., 2015; Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012). The interviews conducted with 12 selected entrepreneurs have shown similar results: most of the women have specified that they are the ones who support children the most (among those who have children) and help them to go through certain obstacles (Maryam, Bushra, Sara, Mira, Ayesha, Saeeda, Nida). The common for many ladies situation has been best described by Sara:

“Being a working woman and a business woman, I always played a full role in [my kids’] childhood. It was never influenced nor did it disturbed my kids’ life. I was always present for them, I was always there for them”.

The only woman who has a slightly different story is Rehana. She has specified that her husband equally contributes to the upbringing and emotional support of their children:

“My husband and I are both interested in what is happening with our daughters. We want them to know that we are there for them”.

Even though it is appealing to see that women have a strong bond with their children, the authors have raised a question “If women support others in the household, who supports them?”.

The examination of the answers provided by women entrepreneurs in the current study has revealed that they are three main “sources” of the presence or lack of emotional support: husband, family of origin (parents, siblings) and parents-in-law. In most cases of the current study the women have the emotional support of the husband and his “consent” to open the business. That matters to a great extent in the context of Pakistan, as men are typically the decision makers (Hussain, et al., 2015), however, this topic is to be later discussed in chapter 5.2.4, “Decision making within the family”.



Another point that is essential to highlight here is the fact that some husbands have refused to finance their wives' projects despite the fact that they had the ability to do so (as in the cases of Maryam, Mira and Nida). Eventually, it has led to the decrease in the feeling that their husbands actually support their initiatives.

What concerns parents-in-law, it seems rather unrealistic to perceive them as the source of emotional support in the way of women's enterprises. Mira's story shows that vividly: the amount of criticism towards Mira's ambitions and desire to be part of the business world have made her hide for two years the fact that she is an entrepreneur in the first place. And even after she confessed her business to parents-in-law, their reaction was too negative and critical. The only exception of this rule has been Saeeda, whose mother-in-law, as specified before, provides not only emotional, but financial assistance to her as well. The discussion concerning the influence of parents-in-law is to be continued in chapter 5.5, "Attitude of the spouse and his family".

On the contrary, parents and in certain cases siblings tend to be much more reliable family members, when it comes to emotional support towards women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. As it has been pointed out in the empirical material part, Maryam, Tahira, Mira and Farina shared statements regarding the vital positive roles their parents have played in their entrepreneurial way. The only entrepreneur who didn't receive any reinforcement was Bushra.

As a conclusion, it can be said that evidence found in the current study proves the point made by previous researchers that women, indeed, are a great support within a family, especially in relation to their children. What concerns the assistance shown towards women, it is mainly provided by husbands (however, at some times to a limited extent), parents and siblings.



5.2.3 Experience of being a wife in the Pakistani society

As mentioned previously (in section 5.2.1 “Breadwinner and homemaker”), the fact that Pakistani society is patriarchal keeps echoing while evaluating different theoretical perspectives. Woman is expected to be a “homemaker” which assigns her the duties of taking care of the household and her children along with routine tasks such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and so forth (Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012; Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006). As we reflect on the empirical evidence gained by the women entrepreneurs (Maryam, Mira, Ayesha, Nida, Seema, Tahira and Saeeda), it could be strongly observed that almost all of the married women were supposed to take over all the respective household responsibilities.

Additionally, the woman is expected to take care of a number of family-related difficulties because the family frequently resides with the parents-in-law (Zaman, Stewart, and Zaman, 2006). For instance, Ayesha’s words were so relatable to this perspective:

“This role is challenging! [...] When you get married, it’s the family you’re married to, not only your husband. [...] He wants me to be a superwoman: to take care of the house and the work outside at the same time [...]. Even though my parents-in-law know that I am working, I still have to make sure that I do the best when I am home”.

As mentioned in the literature review (section 2.3.2 “Gender roles and equality in Pakistan”), the concept of “agency” represents character traits of men such as independence, assertiveness, vigor, and decisiveness. Whereas, women are required to have “communal” traits such as politeness, compassion, obedience, tolerance and timidity to be acceptable in the society and their respective families (Pryzgodna and Chrisler, 2000). For instance, on revisiting Sehar’s response, this ideology could be clearly noticed:

“My parents-in-law and the societal customs forced me to be in a shell[...]. I was not the way they wanted me to be, so I got divorced”.



Similarly, Sara's response mirrors the same situation and perspective in the following way:

“Me, as a wife, I tried my best [...]. Maybe our society expects a lot from us [...], but it didn't work out” (Sara).

While, Tahira has shared an interesting point, which profoundly evidences the present situation in Pakistani society:

“This is how it is and this is how it used to be [...]. We were brought up seeing this and (now) our children are raised seeing the same!”.

Furthermore, Khan (2021) proposed that as per the cultural norms and gender-allocated responsibilities, women are under pressure to demonstrate that they are the perfect housewives and caregivers in addition to engaging in the outside job market, regardless of their level of education and work. Maryam's response puts light on this perspective, which strongly emphasizes on the societal dilemma that she is supposed to serve food and give time to his parents-in-law at any cost no matter what so ever she was going through. Similarly, Ayesha has kept on repeating the same scenario that she is supposed to give herself 100% whenever she's home. Mira's perspective intertwined cultural and religious practices and was of profound evidence to the perspective of Khan (2021):

“Muslim wives are always faithful and obedient, they try to obey their husbands and try to take care of their home, family, children and husband. This is what our cultural requirements also expect us to do”.

As highlighted in the past literature, in Pakistan women are frequently seen as submissive (helpers) to men throughout their lives and lack decision making authority or autonomy in household matters, in addition to social position, financial situation, educational attainment, and marital status (Sathar & Kazi, 2000; Nadeem & Ahmad, 2018; Rawat, 2014). This perspective can be visible in some of the cases (Maryam, Mira, Ayesha, Nida and Tahira). When we revisit Ayesha's response, for instance, who claimed that it took her 10 years to convince her husband to have her own



company, it is strongly evident that immense importance is given to the men of the family to make decisions. Similarly, Nida had shared the same view that she wouldn't have had her business if she would not be allowed by her spouse.

On the other hand, Rehana's experience takes this discussion to a turning point. She has stated that it was solely her own decision to have her own school and she was emotionally supported by her spouse in this. She has further added that both of them are equally taking care of children and move out to earn at the same time. Similarly, Seema claimed that although it was her husband's final decision to say a "yes" to her business, she was certain about his approval. Saeeda, too, has shared that it was mutually decided and no one overpowered in this decision.

In conclusion, in some situations (Maryam, Mira, Ayesha, Nida and Tahira), it may be a breakdealer: if the husband is against it, the woman might not even attempt to put her business plans into action (Hussain, et al., 2015). But Rehana, Seema and Saeeda's cases put light on the other side of the argument, in which men seem to show immense faith in their wives and support them in all the decisions. Decision making within the family is further elaborated in the upcoming section (5.2.4) of this paper.

5.2.4 Decision making within the family

The arguments provided by Zaman, Stewart and Zaman (2006) and Hussain, et al. (2015) lead to the conclusion that in Pakistani society the power of decision making in the family is distributed to the person, who is considered to be the "breadwinner", which is usually a man. However, as it has been discovered earlier in the current chapter, in cases of 12 entrepreneurs that have been interviewed for this study, nine of them actively participate in supporting their families financially. Thus, it is rather interesting to see if that fact influences the decision making process.



As revealed in the empirical material chapter, Mira and Nida strongly depend on the final judgment of their husbands. Considering the fact that the income that they earn from their companies is not contributed to the family budget, it perfectly falls under the theory of Hussain, et al. (2015), reasserting that since the husband is the main provider, he is the one making decisions.

However, other cases rather contradict previously mentioned theory: most of the interviewed women (Bushra, Sara, Sehar, Rehana, Ayesha, Tahira, Seema, Saeeda) are playing the role of the “breadwinner” of the family as well, yet none of them has mentioned that she is the decision maker. The best case scenario that has been observed is equal “power” over family decisions between wife and husband (Ayesha and Rehana). Although, it would be fair to notice that in their cases (+ in the case of Mira) additional approval is required to be given by the father-in-law.

Similar concepts of equality can be noticed in the stories of Seema and Tahira. The ladies state that husbands do not take over the power of making decisions, yet women prefer to go to them and ask for advice or let them make the decision themselves.

These facts might lead to the conclusion that the power of a decision maker within a family is distributed not by the roles of “breadwinner” and “homemaker”, but rather by gender. Following this logic, it should be the man of the family who says the “last word”.

However, this assumption contradicts the stories shared by Sehar and Farina, who stated that in their families it is the elder women who “make the final call”. Thus, the renewed assumption proposed in the current paper would look the following way: the role of the decision maker of the family does not fully rely on the fact of whether the person is a “breadwinner” or not, it is rather likely that decisions are made by men or/and elder family members.



5.3 Financial and educational background of the family

As mentioned in the literature review (section 2.2.2), according to Tahir, et al. (2018), in households, where the spouse earns a respectable amount of money, a wife is more likely to launch a business. This perspective can be related to some of the responses gained from women entrepreneurs who had a strong financial background. For instance, Saeeda has claimed that her husband had his own business and was really successful. It was due to her own aspirations, which has led her to become an entrepreneur. She was financially supported by her husband as well when she initiated her business. And now, she is able to financially support her husband and family in their hard times. This example serves the purpose of understanding that spouse's financial background contributes a great deal towards motivating or restricting a woman to become an entrepreneur.

Moreover, this income related fact draws our attention towards Rehana's example as well who claimed to have been supported immensely by her spouse in terms of finances and emotional stand. Although, it was Rehana's personal choice of serving for the interests of the children in the rural area she was residing in, she has claimed:

“He (spouse) has always encouraged me to take initiatives [...]. He has complete faith in me. He takes care of the household when I am not at home and vice versa”.

Seema's case, also, exemplifies the perspective of Tahir, et al. (2018). Her husband was an established homeopathic doctor and they never fell short of finances. It was her personal choice of developing networks and doing something useful rather than sitting idly and “spending his (husband's) income worthlessly”.

Having considered another aspect of this argument, in Sehar's case, all her family members were self-sufficient, highly educated and financially stable. Thus, becoming an entrepreneur, for her, was not obstructed by any of the familial circumstances. But Sehar's case draws attention towards the support



of family of origin and siblings (which is later on elaborated in this paper) as she is a single parent and is not living with her spouse anymore. Sara, also, was living with her sibling, a brother. As she has mentioned that everyone was well educated in her family and was financially independent, she was emotionally supported by her brother and his wife and has never been demotivated.

On the other hand, Tahir et al. (2018)'s perspective is contradicted by Bushra's example. She confidently claimed:

“I had no one to provide me with finances [...], no brothers and no parents[...], the decision (to become an entrepreneur) was all mine [...]. I had to live through all my hardships all on my own”.

She is not an educated lady and had limited resources when she started her own business. She had no contact with her brothers and parents in the whole process. This gives birth to a new idea, which tells that the financial background of the family may not provide a supportive environment for women entrepreneurs in some cases.

According to Tahir, et al. (2018), the more money a spouse makes, the more power he has over the family. As a result, the woman feels less important as a part of the family, which adds to her emotional weight within the family. Maryam's perception is quite relatable in this scenario. She claimed that her husband has his own business and they both earn through their own businesses. Still, she is made aware by other family members that her income is just for her sake and is of no use to the entire family. This adds on to the depression in her life, as it could be observed through all her responses in terms of familial influence. Her father-in-law has great influence in her family, especially when it comes to decision making and family budgeting. This fact relates to Tahir, et al. (2018)'s perspective that men often dominate decision making and resource distribution procedures within the family, since they have historically earned and controlled the majority of the family income. They further add on by stating that this may confine women to the



home, restrict their access to education, impede their independence, and rob them of financial autonomy. Maryam's words mirror this idea:

“[...] irrespective of the struggle I was going through [...] I was always reminded of the fact that I have to give my best at home as my earning hardly matters and it's only my husband's income, which creates value for them”.

Similarly, Nida has shared that she wanted independence and financial stability for herself, even though her husband was earning well:

“I did not want to be accountable for spending his money”.

This statement reflects Tahir, et al. (2009)'s perspective that the more a husband earns, the stronger his influence within the family is. Nida has claimed that she was highly dependent on her husband, but there came situations when she had to face unpredictable behavioural patterns and mood swings from her husband. This, eventually, has led her to have her own business in order to reduce the level of accountability she had in terms of spending her husband's income.

According to Tambunan (2009), the research that has been discussed earlier states that "the greater the education of the [parents-in-law]/husband is, the less impact of the conventional thinking in their attitudes toward women". Rehana's experience evidenced this idea as she stated that all her family members were well educated and financially stable. Therefore, it was not a difficult decision for her to be an entrepreneur. The circumstances at her home were suitable for her to do whatever she desired.

However, Saeeda added another point to the discussion by stating that her mother-in-law has never attended school, which served as one of the reasons for her to motivate Saeeda to follow her dreams. Her mother-in-law wanted Saeeda to do what she herself couldn't do, when she was younger. This experience takes the discussion to a different point as in this case: the educational background of her mother-in-law did not matter at all. Therefore,



it's hard to decide whether the educational background of the parents-in-law greatly influences the entrepreneurial decision or not.

On the contrary, Maryam's words are:

“My father-in-law is a university graduate and has saved a lot as a retired bank manager [...], but this (financial and educational background) hardly matters in my case”.

This is a clear statement which represents a contradiction to Tambunan's (2009) idea as Maryam confidently shared, later on, in her interview that what mattered for her parents-in-law was the accomplishment of household chores and not her profession. Mira and Ayesha had similar views as well.

Farina, on the other hand, has shared that her mother was also an educated lady and has spent a lot on the education of her children. This entails the importance of education in her family. But this case differs from the rest as she is unmarried and lives with her family of origin which will be, later on, discussed in this paper.

To cut it short, educational and financial background does influence the entrepreneurial decision of women in Pakistan, but so do variations in the family structure, marital status, level of cultural influence on families, which may yield a different conclusion to the discussion. Past literature has greatly discussed how important or significant the financial and educational background of the family can be in terms of entrepreneurial decisions. However, such a connection has not been observed in the current research, thus, it can be proposed that the financial and educational background of the family does not have a strong influence on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

Furthermore, familial aspects influence differently on mumpreneurs and married women as compared to divorced or single women. The influence of



children on the household, entrepreneurial decisions and process of mumpreneurs, is discussed in detail in the upcoming section.

5.4 Children in the household

An important aspect that needs to be mentioned before the analysis and discussion on the children in the household begins is to specify that not all entrepreneurs that have been interviewed in the current study are mothers. Seema does not have children, thus, the analysis is to be related to eleven other entrepreneurs (Maryam, Bushra, Sara, Mira, Ayesha, Sehar, Rehana, Nida, Tahira, Farina and Saeeda).

Looking at the definition provided by Makola (2022, p. 1), it can be with no doubt said that all of the previously mentioned ladies are mumpreneurs, as all of them match the description of “an individual that takes advantage of business opportunities in a geographical and social space that allows them to combine the roles of business ownership and motherhood”. They all explore market opportunities within Pakistan, being the entrepreneurs and mothers at the same time.

In the current analysis that was not the only time when the theory on the topic has matched the evidence found by the researchers. For instance, Rehman and Azam Roomi (2012) have specified that the role of mother within a Pakistani society is extremely important, not only from societal perspective, but for women themselves, thus, they would want to provide the best upbringing for their children and constant presence in their lives. The interviews with the Pakistani entrepreneurs have shown the same findings multiple times in stories of Maryam, Sara, Ayesha, Nida and others:

Even though I am a business woman, I always played a full role in my kids' childhood. It has never influenced nor has it disturbed my children's life. I was always present for them, I was always there for them. [...] And I was really happy to be a mother and an entrepreneur, running my business and my home at the same time. Me being a working woman has never disappointed anybody, because it has never influenced my home or my family in any way” (Sara).



Another theoretical aspect that has been proven is the advantage of having more flexible hours in comparison with regular 9-5 hours (Tariq, 2018). This fact has been used for dedicating more time to their children by Nida, Mira and Saeeda. However, even though it is usually considered to be an advantage, in stories of these women it has led to the creation of a rather difficult time schedule. Ladies ended up taking care of children and household during the daytime, while night hours they had to dedicate to their businesses.

Unsurprisingly, this and other challenging aspects of being a mother and an entrepreneur at the same time induces the appearance of mental issues. Sara, Mira, Tahira, Rehana, Nida and Saeeda have specified how hard and challenging it was for them. Statements made by them prove the point made by Rodrigues, Daniel and Franco (2022) and Rehman and Azam Roomi (2012) that mumpreneurship consists not only of two elements, which are entrepreneurship and motherhood, but of third one, well-being balance, as well.

It seems rather essential to raise a question of how the well-being of women entrepreneurs with children can be achieved. Gladly, some of the entrepreneurs that have taken participation in the current study have confirmed that they and their husbands share the care of children equally between each other (Rehara, Sara). However, the situation does not look the same way for everyone: as single parents it has been extremely hard for Bushra, Sara and Sehar to achieve that balance and dedicate the required amount of time both to business and their children.

However, what seems to be rather important and in some way pleasing for the researchers to notice the fact that even though mumpreneurship brings up a number of everyday challenges for women, most of them still consider their children to be motivation and engine on the way to success (Maryam, Ayesha, Sara, Nida). This view has been best summarized by Maryam:



“I want to be a role model for my daughters. I want to educate them that sky is the limit for them”.

At the end it can be said that the previous literature on the topic has been rather correct, when it comes to the children in the household of women entrepreneurs. Women, indeed, prioritize their children’s upbringing and constant presence in their lives, which is why they have chosen entrepreneurship as a way to have more flexible working hours. And even though certain challenges related to the balance of women’s well-being appear, they still consider their children to be their main strength and motivation. Along with the influence of children in the household, the attitude of the spouse and his family (discussed in the following section) influences greatly on the entrepreneurial processes of the women entrepreneurs. These aspects are intermingled and are inseparable.

5.5 Attitude of the spouse and his family

As discussed earlier in section 2.2.1 (“Gender assigned roles”), Schwartz (1987) and Monticelli, Bernardon and Trez (2020) greatly emphasize family as a gendered institution impacting people from different cultures. According to them, family socializes and entitles women to be “feminine” and men to be “masculine”. This research puts light on the current experiences shared by the women entrepreneurs who have confidently shared statements which are quite relatable to the above mentioned perspectives. For instance, Ayesha has shared that her husband loved her a lot, but it took 10 years of her marriage to convince him to have her own business. She further added that she was forced to be at home and compromise on her personal experiences as for them (parents-in-law), she was supposed to take care of the household and children. Similarly, Maryam shared that although her husband has always been emotionally supportive, but, at times, he was under strong influence of his family which altered his attitude towards her. Maryam’s words are a strong expression of the “masculine man” and “feminine woman” entitlement:



“They do not know what is going on in here (pointing her finger towards her head)..they just want their meals on time”.

This can also be related to Khalid’s (2021, p. 339) perspective of "honor" which is central to Pakistani culture and places a strong emphasis on the family, which means that women are held accountable for the “[...] integrity, stability, harmony, and reputation of the entire family, even if this means enduring various forms of maltreatment, injustices, and discrimination”. In other words, Maryam, Mira and Ayesha’s responses are highly supporting this idea of preserving the reputation, peace and dignity of the entire family, even if doing so requires putting up with different sorts of abuse, injustice, and prejudice.

To put it another way, a "good" woman is "... tolerant, obedient, unselfish, calm, empathetic, reliable, compromising, coordinator, hospitable, and relationship oriented, [...] perform household chores, care for her husband, children, and parents-in-law, and even support her family financially when the need arises" (Ali, et al., 2011; Khalid 2021, p. 339). This perspective is closely related to Mira’s words:

“No matter what so ever my earning was [...] I had to be accountable, if I was not fulfilling my household responsibilities... Kitchen and laundry comes first and my earning is secondary for them...”.

In addition to this, women and men have physiological distinctions that are claimed by theorists to interpret various gender roles and the resulting attitudes (Nowak and Wyleżalek, 2019). This perspective of the researchers can be related to Mira’s response claiming:

“I was brought up seeing this and (now) my children are growing up seeing this.. Man of the family earns and the woman stays home taking care of the household...”.

According to Ali, et al. (2011), despite fulfilling all of these duties, she never does any household or outdoor activity without first obtaining consent from her husband or another male family member. For instance, the majority of the



married women (Maryam, Ayesha, Mira, Tahira, Saeeda, Rehana and Seema), who was interviewed, have claimed that they became entrepreneurs after getting approval from their husbands.

As per the customs of assigning chores to each sex, women and men are assigned separate jobs inside the household. This draws our attention, again, to the “breadwinner” and the “homemaker” concepts. As discussed earlier in this paper, almost all of the women entrepreneurs (Maryam, Ayesha, Sara, Mira, Saeeda, Tahira, Rehana, Sehar and Seema) have claimed to be the “homemakers”, while having men of their families (e.g. husband, father-in-law or brother) to be main “breadwinners”. This validates the perspective presented in numerous researches that in Pakistani society, husband is seen as the “breadwinner” and wife as the “homemaker” (Hussain, et al., 2015; Rehman and Azam Roomi, 2012; Roomi and Parrott, 2008; Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006).

Oftenly, the family lives with the parents-in-law (more specifically, husband’s parents), which also contributes to the list of family-related issues that the wife is supposed to take care of (Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006). According to the empirical evidence gained, it can be noticed that most of the women entrepreneurs (Maryam, Ayesha and Mira) are residing in a joint family system and are obliged to perform duties that are related to almost all of the family members under the same shelter. For instance, in Mira’s case, it was noticeable that her mother-in-law has imposed numerous household chores on her and the accomplishment of these tasks was central for the mother-in-law. This indicates the overburdening of women with domestic responsibilities and not valuing what they have earned and accomplished so far.

However, Saeeda’s example contradicts this perspective (Zaman, Stewart and Zaman, 2006), as she claimed that she had been emotionally and financially supported by her husband and mother-in-law in her venture. She has confidently stated that her mother-in-law wanted her to do what she herself



couldn't do when she was younger. This case is evidence that perspectives vary in different family settings. This case puts light on Critelli (2010)'s argument that pressures of such conceptual themes differ from women to women and from family to family.

It can be observed that in some of the cases (Tahira, Seema and Nida), women who live alone with their husbands and children are more likely to be satisfied, calm and performing well in their businesses. For instance, Tahira's response puts light on this fact specifically:

“Thanks to God, as I live separately, I am blessed and my experience (of being an entrepreneur) has been great so far [...] I have managed to gather a good client base”.

Similarly, Seema's words also reflect a somewhat identical situation:

“[...] He is happy that I have involved myself in something fruitful as having no children causes a feeling of emptiness and depression in me”.

In Rehana's case, the situation differs to some extent. Although she was immensely supported by husband, the level of support was not the same with respect to parents-in-law. Her response is a reflection of Stewart's and Zaman's (2006) perspective:

“No matter how much support you get from your husband, there comes a point when society and your parents-in-law remind you of you being a woman [...] They say “It was your choice, not ours!”.

Analyzing the empirical evidence with respect to the past research, it may be concluded that the attitude of the spouse and parents-in-law is directly proportional to the entrepreneurial decisions and processes for women in Pakistan. It can be observed that women who claimed to be overburdened with household responsibilities are hindered by the cultural, familial and societal patterns as well. The greater the support of the spouse is, the greater the level of satisfaction for the woman entrepreneur is. Same trend follows in terms of parents-in-law. On the other hand, some women (Maryam, Ayesha,



Mira, Nida and Rehana) have claimed that parents-in-law do not express complete confidence in them and force them to perform household chores first. While, Saeeda's case represents the family setting in which parents-in-law show extreme support, which ultimately contributes to their progress. Some cases (Seema and Tahira) represent the nuclear family setting, in which husbands financially and emotionally support their wives. Through this it can be stated that the attitude of the spouse, parents-in-law and family structure do influence entrepreneurial decisions of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. However, societal pressures and stereotypical mindsets can not be ignored in this process.

5.6 Family of origin

During the process of analyzing the previous literature on the topic of family influence on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan, the aspects related to parents and/or siblings of these women have been mentioned only a few times and have not been much specified. However, during the interviews conducted in the current research, multiple participants have taken initiative to talk about their family of origin and share their influence on entrepreneurial paths of women. Thus, it seems rather interesting and insightful to analyze some of the gathered responses on that topic.

5.6.1 Parents

As it has been specified in the empirical material part (chapter 4.6.1), the overwhelming majority of women entrepreneurs who have taken part in the interviews have mentioned what a positive role their parents played in their lives. Parents of Maryam, Mira, Tahira, Farina and Sehar have always wanted the best for their daughters and have seen that this best can be achieved through opening their own businesses, reaching new goals and becoming independent. They have provided great emotional and in certain cases financial support for them. Moreover, some parents were there for their daughters in terms of everyday chores as well. For instance, Maryam has



mentioned a few times that when she is busy at her enterprise, she can rely on her mother in terms of babysitting and taking care of Maryam's daughter.

With no doubt, the family situation might be different and, obviously, not only positive, which can be observed in the case of Bushra. Her parents have strongly expressed their disagreement with Bushra's decision to divorce her husband. Moreover, after the divorce was finalized, they continued to make her guilty and shame the woman for this decision. Of course, this negatively affected Bushra's mental health, which once again proves that the influence of parents plays a significant role. That is why it seems rather important to suggest further research on the influence of parents on women entrepreneurs to more clearly estimate the relationship between these two aspects.

5.6.2 Siblings

Revisiting the idea of "honor" proposed by Khalid (2021), it can be considered that Pakistani culture places a strong emphasis on the family. As a result, women are held responsible for the "[...] integrity, stability, harmony, and reputation of the entire family, even if this means enduring various forms of maltreatment, injustices, and discrimination". This idea is contradicted by few of the examples of women entrepreneurs who are currently residing with their own parents and/or siblings. Researchers have discussed a lot about Pakistani culture imposing restrictions on women entrepreneurs of Pakistan, but the differences in scenarios whether the woman is married, unmarried or divorced is still not mentioned with clarity. The empirical evidence acquired has given rise to a new concept of the role of family of origin and siblings in the lives of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. For instance, Sara is a good example, which proves to be a contradiction to what is proposed by Khalid (2021). According to Sara:

"I live with my brother and his family [...]. We provide immense emotional support to each other [...]. We support each other in both good and hard times".



Similarly, Sehar has clearly mentioned in her interview that as a single mother she has never faced any kind of discrimination at her home. She was always supported by her parents and elder brothers. For them definition of “honor” is different and her words profoundly evidence this fact:

“My brothers are proud of me and so are my parents”.

While considering Farina’s experience, a smooth shift from her teaching profession to entrepreneurship could be easily observed. That’s all because of her mother’s and brother’s motivational support, again, contradicting Khalid's (2021) perspective. These experiences represent the probability of having different situations in different families. This can be related to Critelli’s (2010) perspective that every woman and family has their own unique experiences and situations.

Moreover, the authors assert that family is a true institution, since both of them are systems "of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions" (Hodgson, 2006; Monticelli, Bernardon, and Trez, 2020, p. 59) based on the prior study. According to this definition, it can be stated that siblings are also an important part of a family as social interactions are involved with them as well. This definition of family entails that a family may consist of parents, parents-in-law, spouse, children or siblings as well. Different family structures were evidenced from the interviews of women entrepreneurs. They had variations in family structure, number of family members and so forth.

If we take this concept a step further, we might argue that family is where particular moral ideals and norms are developed, and that this development eventually results in the emergence of "structures, processes, and policies" (Monticelli, Bernardon, and Trez, 2020, p. 59). Considering this perspective, one can evaluate that familial decisions are structured according to the morals and norms prevailing within the family and society. For instance, Bushra has confidently stated that she was held responsible for her divorce



and, thus, her brothers demotivated her and left her alone. They had the fear of being overburdened by societal pressures. As said by Bushra:

“What will people say?...How will we answer them? - These were the words of my brothers”.

Therefore, these internal rules of the family as an institution can either present a chance for women to start their own enterprises or a barrier that prevents it (Monticelli, Bernardon, and Trez, 2020). For Bushra’s case, the negative attitude of his brothers became a motivational factor to strive and develop her own business. On the contrary, Sehar has had a similar family structure, but everybody in her family has motivated her for whatever she was doing. Therefore, it can be stated that familial decisions in Sehar’s family were differently structured, as compared to those of Bushra.

To sum up, there is not much research carried out on the influence of siblings on women entrepreneurs in Pakistan, however, some of the perspectives may be analyzed in the light of the new empirical evidence gained. It can be stated that decision making in the family may be shaped according to the rules and regulations, norms and values within a family. Some families may mold their living standards as per the societal trends but some families may simply adopt (from within the societal patterns) for something that suits them.

6 Conclusions

The current chapter consists of key findings discovered in the study, practical aspects of implementing the results, limitations of the research, as well as future research implications.

6.1 Key findings

The research question included the influence of family on women entrepreneurs in the context of Pakistan. Understanding different



family-related aspects has led to the emergence of a number of themes some of which were unexplored in the past literature.

All 12 entrepreneurs have shared their experiences confidently and there has been a great deal of commonalities and differences identified from the responses gained. Their experiences were quite relatable to the perspectives shared in the past research. However, at some points their opinions contradicted the past literature giving birth to new concepts and themes to be explored for further research.

Combining the available research with the empirical data on the root causes of entrepreneurship, it can be concluded that entrepreneurial traits, internal locus of control, the need for success in terms of financial stability, fame, independence, and push and pull factors all play a role in the decision making process of entrepreneurs.

On examining the gender roles in terms of “breadwinner” and “homemaker” concepts, it might be argued that women do play a significant role in the "homemaker" position and take care of many elements of family life. However, the same conclusion cannot be drawn in terms of "breadwinner" because, in many circumstances, both men and women are seen as contributing to the household's finances, creating a "double job" for Pakistani women entrepreneurs.

Emotional support within the family cannot be ignored when it comes to a woman being a “homemaker” and an entrepreneur at the same time. It may be concluded that women, indeed, are a great support within a family, especially in relation to their children. What concerns the assistance shown towards women, is mainly provided by husbands (however, at some times to a limited extent), parents and siblings.

Considering the assistance shown by the husbands, it was found out that in certain cases if the husband is against it, the wife might not even try to implement her business ambitions. However, other instances provide light on



the opposite side of the debate, when men appear to have great trust in their wives and follow them in all of their decisions. Moreover, it can also be stated that the family's male members are viewed to have the last say. However, this presumption is false in certain limited instances, where the older women in their family "make the final decision". This means that the updated premise put out in the present research would be as follows: it is more probable that men or/and senior family members will serve as the family's decision makers rather than only depending on whether they are the "breadwinner" or not.

On enquiring about the educational and financial background of the families, it can be concluded that it does not have a considerable influence on business decisions, but gender-specific roles, stereotyped mindsets, and other factors might have a stronger influence on entrepreneurial processes. When compared to divorced or single women, mumpreneurs and married women experience the implications within a family differently. Considering mumpreneurs, while certain obstacles to women's well-being in balance may arise, they nevertheless see their children as their greatest source of inspiration and power.

Following this, the attitude of the spouse and his parents is another factor analyzed in the light of empirical evidence gained. The conclusion that has been made in that relation lies in the fact that the attitude of the husband and parents-in-law directly influences the entrepreneurial choices and actions of women in Pakistan. The greater the support of the spouses is, the greater the level of satisfaction for women is. Same trend follows in terms of parents-in-law.

Considering the influence of family of origin, it can be shown in the instance of one of the entrepreneurs, the family situation may undoubtedly vary and simply may not be favorable. Her mental health was undoubtedly harmed by this, which is another evidence of the fact that parental influence is



important. However, most of the entrepreneurs expressed immense support from their own parents and siblings in the entrepreneurial processes.

In other words, it can be concluded that gender stereotypes, family rules, regulations, conventions, as well as cultural and/or societal values may influence how entrepreneurial decisions are made within the family. While some families may modify their standard of life to fit cultural trends, other families may choose to adopt (within societal patterns) what best suits them. Ultimately, it can be concluded that family has, indeed, a strong influence on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan, both in positive and negative ways.

6.2 Practical Implications

The results of this study have a wide range of implications for various categories of professionals. It is important to note that every professional or institution might develop their understanding differently. In our findings, family-related aspects influence differently on women entrepreneurs of Pakistan. There might be a factor influencing one woman, but the same might not have a significant impact on the other. This paper portrays the diversities prevailing in different family settings. Therefore, these variations in trends may be useful resources for women entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, as well as government institutions.

Implications for women entrepreneurs

This paper provides a better understanding of the current domestic circumstances with the help of the empirical evidence. This may be beneficial for women entrepreneurs in certain ways. They might relate the mentioned experiences with their current circumstances and predict probable influential aspects within their respective families. In other words, they may foresee the possible upcoming challenges or motivations within their families on their entrepreneurial way. This would be beneficial, as it given women entrepreneurs to prepare for and, perhaps, change some negative aspects of family influence on their businesses. Moreover, women entrepreneurs may



also gain inspiration from the personal experiences and ways of conducting businesses in certain familial situations. Women with children could change their perception and get immensely motivated by considering their children as their strength rather than taking them to be an obstruction in the path of entrepreneurship.

Implications for non-profit organizations

Knowing the factors that influence women entrepreneurship may provide support for non-profit organizations to gain a deeper understanding of the current prevailing situation of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan. This may further lead them to extend and improve help and assistance for women entrepreneurs. Certain NGOs in Pakistan, at present, are working to liberate women from societal pressures and familial disturbances by counselling and guiding them in their professions. Moreover, they aim to increase the chances and capacity of women and girls to realize their full potential by empowering them via programs in the areas of education, livelihood training, health and nutrition. Thus, this paper may serve as a progenitive resource for them to devise measures and strategies to improvise the current situation.

Implication for Government agencies/institutions

Similarly to the practical implications for non-profit organizations, government agencies or institutions may also find this paper helpful. As this paper intricately discusses the domestic condition and societal values shaping the family structures, the research and development departments of governmental organizations may get immense help in identifying problems associated with the women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. Consequently, it may help them in proposing policies and strategies to improve the situation.

6.3 Limitations

It is important to specify that the current paper has a certain number of limitations, which are to be presented further. These limitations include the



time constraints, a limited number of interviewed entrepreneurs and the specifics of Pakistani context and personal experience.

Firstly, the current research has had to be fulfilled in the established timeframe (which has equaled to one semester), which has had a certain influence on the pace of work and its final result. Thus, the results presented above are the findings on the topic that has become possible to discover within the given time restriction. The authors acknowledge that the prolonged version of further research on the relationship between family and women entrepreneurship in Pakistan might provide an extended number of findings.

Secondly, the time constraint has led to the appearance of the limitations within the number of women entrepreneurs that are to be interviewed. The consideration of that restriction together with the guidance provided by literature on methodology for achieving research purposes best has resulted in the choice of 12 women entrepreneurs. Hence, the findings presented in the current paper are strongly connected to the responses of these entrepreneurs, which is a limitation.

Thirdly, it seems essential to notice that, as the purpose of the paper is to investigate the relationship between family and women entrepreneurship in Pakistan, the results are limited by that country. The authors acknowledge the fact that even though the findings of the current research might shed some light on women entrepreneurship in other countries as well, they are mainly related and, thus, helpful within the context of Pakistan.

And lastly, the relationships within the family as an institution and the influence it creates are hard to measure with quantitative tools, as it is rather an experience. Hence, the paper results are limited by personal experiences of 12 chosen women entrepreneurs. That leads to the conclusion that the experience of other entrepreneurs might be different.



6.4 Future Research Implications

Initially, the current study has aimed to validate existing literature in the light of the empirical evidence acquired, which eventually has led to the emergence of new concepts and themes worthy to contribute to the future research in academia. For instance, existing research discusses a lot about family as an institution and its influence on women, however, the structure of family and the members who make it up, is still vague. In other words, the term “family” is mentioned numerous times, but none have clearly defined whether a family consists of parents-in-law, siblings, spouse or children. Thus, one of the suggestions proposed by the current paper is to examine the structure of family and the influence of that structure on women entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

Secondly, existing literature specifies the influence of spouses, children and parents-in-law on women entrepreneurs, yet the influence of parents and siblings on the entrepreneurial processes is nearly unexplored. As in the current research participants have mentioned their original family members multiple times and have highlighted the importance of the part they play, it seems rather interesting for the academic society to investigate this topic further.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide

Introduction

Please, introduce yourself, your current occupation and educational background.

- Company (Could you, please, describe your business?)
 - 1) What type of business are you in? What services or products do you offer?
 - 2) When did you start your business?
 - 3) What has motivated you to become an entrepreneur?
 - 4) Are you the only founder of the company?
- Family (Could you, please, describe your family?)
 - 1) Are you currently married? If yes, for how long have you been married?
 - 2) Do you have children? If yes, how many and of which age?
 - 3) Who are your family members you live with?

Gender assigned roles

- 1) Are you familiar with the concepts of “breadwinner” and “homemaker”? Have these concepts been part of your family? If yes, how?
- 2) How is your family budget constructed? Who contributes and how?
- 3) How was your family budget constructed before you opened your business?
- 4) Who and how provides emotional support for other family members (for instance, children)?
- 5) What is your experience of being a wife within a Pakistani society?

Financial and educational background of the family

- 1) How would you describe how financially sufficient your family is?
- 2) How would you describe the financial sufficiency of your family before you started a business?
- 3) How is the decision making process organized in your family? How was it organized before you opened your business?
- 4) Could you, please, describe your partner’s educational background?
- 5) What was his influence (support/obstruct) on the process of you becoming an entrepreneur?



- 6) If you live with your parents/parents-in-law, please, describe their educational background.
- 7) What was their influence on the process of you becoming an entrepreneur?

Children in the household

- 1) How did being a mother influence you becoming an entrepreneur?
- 2) What is your experience of being a mother and running a business at the same time?
- 3) Would you rather say being a mother was a motivation or a challenge for you on your entrepreneurial way? Why?

Final questions

- 1) How, do you think, your family in general influenced your entrepreneurial way?
- 2) What is your experience of motivations for business within the family?
- 3) What is your experience of challenges for business within the family?
- 4) Is there anything else you would like to share that we didn't ask?