

Behind the Veil: Women-only Entrepreneurship Training in Pakistan

Muhammad Azam Roomi

Principal Lecturer / Director Research - CWE
University of Bedfordshire Business School
University of Bedfordshire
Luton LU1 3JU
United Kingdom

E-mail: muhammad.roomi@beds.ac.uk

Dr Pegram Harrison

Fellow in Entrepreneurship
Saïd Business School
University of Oxford
Oxford OX1 5NY
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1865 422 744

E-mail: pegram.harrison@sbs.ox.ac.uk

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Muhammad Azam Roomi is a Principal Lecturer and the Director of Research at the University of Bedfordshire's Centre for Women's Enterprise. His research interests are in the growth and performance of SMEs, entrepreneurial leadership, entrepreneurship education, and women's entrepreneurship in the UK as well as Islamic and Asian countries.

Pegram Harrison is a Fellow in Entrepreneurship at the Saïd Business School in the University of Oxford. His research interests are in social entrepreneurship and regional development.

Behind the Veil: Women-only Entrepreneurship Training in Pakistan

Abstract

Purpose –To understand the gender-related challenges of Pakistani women entrepreneurs, to explore these women’s particular capacity-building needs, and to assess the impact of capacity-building programs on the establishment and performance of the women’s enterprises.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper begins with a review of various theoretical contexts through which to understand women’s entrepreneurship in an Islamic socio-cultural context. From this we derive two working propositions: (1) women in Islamic Pakistan face particular barriers to becoming entrepreneurs; (2) these barriers can be reduced by women-only training in entrepreneurial competences. These propositions are examined in a three-part longitudinal process: 1) a field survey to gather information about the training needs of current and potential women entrepreneurs, 2) the design and delivery of a women-only training module, 3) a follow-up survey with participants, 18 months later. Subjects and participants were randomly selected, and segmented according to entrepreneurial factors and characteristics.

Findings – Results confirm that the barriers perceived by women entrepreneurs in Islamic Pakistan can be alleviated through women-only training that allows participants to develop capital and competences. Greater clarity about learning outcomes desired and achieved by women entrepreneurs in an Islamic socio-cultural context can be a basis for designing improved training and education programmes, with a view to women’s economic empowerment.

Practical implications – For women entrepreneurs living in an Islamic society, this analysis has implications for understanding the importance and effectiveness of entrepreneurial training especially in a women-only setting. For policy makers, it turns the spotlight on the need for creating an environment conducive to female entrepreneurship consistent with socio-cultural structures and gender asymmetries.

Originality/Value – There are no comparable previous data on the learning preferences and outcomes of this particular demographic group.

Key words – women, Islamic Pakistan, entrepreneurship education and training

Type of Paper – Research Paper

7,243 Words in main body of text
9,854 Words including main body, tables, and bibliography

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and objectives

This study reports data on women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. The aim is to investigate the peculiar challenges faced by such women, given the barriers of gender and socio-cultural norms that they must overcome to pursue their ventures, and to suggest ways that the right kind of training can help them overcome those barriers. Though we make some propositions about the nature of these challenges and barriers, we do not test hypotheses, nor do we attempt to determine any causal relationships within the data. Instead, we make a contribution toward a later and more rigorous analysis by collecting data from a difficult source and by contextualising it within previous work.

In brief, because certain Pakistani traditions can be seen to inhibit the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences, our primary objective is to suggest that these inhibitions can be overcome with appropriate training. With these data, we show that women value and profit from networking and peer-to-peer learning, and that training which facilitates these and other competences in a women-only environment can expand opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

1.2 Islamic societies and women's entrepreneurship

The unequal status of women in Islamic societies is due in part to the connection of gender with various forms of exclusion: religious prescriptions, cultural norms, and actual practices related to a woman's status and role (Afkhami, 1995; Afshar, 1985; Mernissi 1987; Moghaddam, 1994). Moreover, exclusions vary widely and are sometimes highly contradictory. 'There is considerable diversity in the status of women across classes (the socio-economic status of a woman's family), geographical regions, ethnic origin and the rural/urban divide due to uneven socioeconomic development and the impact of tribal, and feudal, social formations on women's lives' (Roomi and Parrott, 2008: 60). Women in higher social strata are able to pursue more opportunities, mainly because they have greater access to education and because their husbands and families tend to be less discouraging of women entrepreneurs. Support for women's entrepreneurship is not one-

dimensional, however; research from other developing countries suggests that male support can be conditioned by interrelated factors both within and beyond social attitudes (for example, change in male income levels relative to female), and that income generation can have as much to do with relative status as with gender (Njeru and Mjoka, 2001).

However, no matter which class or region Pakistani women belong to, their situation relative to men is one of systemic subordination determined by specific patriarchal forces. Two factors especially influence women's occupational roles: the cultural norm of 'Pardah'(veil) and the notion of 'Izzat' (honour). 'Pardah' has significance as an instrument of sexual segregation and seclusion based on spatial boundaries, where women's activities are confined mainly inside the home while men work outside, or where women's extramural activities are concealed behind the portable boundary of the veil (Papanek, 1982). 'Izzat' is the notion that women are repositories of a family's honour, and that their chastity and good reputation, being highly valued, must be guarded (Shaheed, 1990). Additional subordination derives from restrictions on spatial mobility; Shabbir and Di Gregorio (1996) point out the inadequacy of transportation facilities, both private and public, as an actual physical limitation on movement through space. More importantly, women are not often permitted to move around freely; from early childhood, they are not allowed to go out of their houses or to mix with males independently. Throughout life, they are protected and discouraged from doing things on their own.

For these reasons, the general aims and objectives of this study are to assess the training needs of existing and potential women entrepreneurs. In addition, following interviews with many women in an initial phase of research and determining that the lack of women-only training assistance was one of the main hindrances in achieving their entrepreneurial goals, more specific objectives of this study are to determine the impact of such women-only training assistance—and to determine empirically whether, in women-only settings where 'Pardah' and 'Izzat' and spatial mobility are less significant forces, women entrepreneurs can be studied for their innate characteristics rather than relative to men (Ahl, 2006).

In outline, then, this research seeks to understand the gender-related challenges of Pakistani women entrepreneurs, to explore these women's particular capacity-building needs, and to assess the impact of capacity-building programs on the establishment and performance of the women's enterprises.

2. Theoretical basis of the research

2.1 The social context of entrepreneurship and new venturing

The theoretical paradox between entrepreneurial competences and Islamic traditions can be contextualised by considering various theories involving the social context and environment of new venturing and entrepreneurship.

At its most basic, entrepreneurship is 'the pursuit of opportunity without regard to the resources currently controlled' (Stevenson, 1983: 1). In slightly more detail, entrepreneurship concerns the environment conditioning opportunity, the process of discovering opportunity, the evaluation and exploitation of opportunity, and the individual decision-makers who do these things (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). In an inherently resource-constrained context such as the social status of women in many Islamic communities, manifold obstacles prevent all but the most determined entrepreneurs from perceiving and pursuing opportunities, because of obstructed access to resources and the presence of social risks—both factors more exaggerated than those in many developed and non-Islamic communities. However, some Muslim women entrepreneurs do succeed, and their new ventures conform to a wide range of theoretical models highlighting various inter-related concepts: value creation (Say, 1830); innovation and the agency of change (Schumpeter, 1951); the pursuit of opportunity (Drucker, 1985); resourcefulness or use of resources (Hart *et al.*, 1997; Stevenson and Gumpert, 1985); feasibility (Mullins, 2003); and planning (Timmons, 2003).

Recent, more esoteric theory explores entrepreneurs in resource-constrained or socially constricting environments through concepts such as cognition (Baron, 2004), regulatory focus

(Brockner *et al.*, 2004), social structuration (Chiasson and Saunders, 2005), and embeddedness (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003).

Theory of embeddedness concerns the role of entrepreneurs within society and its formal institutions (such as family and even gender). For Aldrich and Cliff (2003: 573) ‘transformations in the institution of the family have implications for the emergence of new business opportunities, opportunity recognition, business start-up decisions, and the resource mobilisation process’; although this theoretical context is framed in the non-Islamic society of North America, it has general relevance in the context of the family as a social structure into which entrepreneurial activity is embedded. Combining structuration and embeddedness theory in a similar way, Jack and Anderson (2002: 467) note that ‘being embedded in the social structure creates opportunity and improves performance’; their work shows that ‘embedding enabled the entrepreneurs to use the specifics of the environment. Thus, both recognition and realisation of opportunity are conditioned by the entrepreneur’s role in the social structure’. By implication, this research from North America suggests that women entrepreneurs in Pakistan are equally embedded within their social structurations, and must act accordingly (c.f. Giddens, 1984). For all of these theoretical models, the entrepreneur is engaged in a self-realising process usually against social obstacles; in the context of Pakistani women, these models are theoretically relevant, especially when they are underpinned by empirical work to substantiate the idea that women have specific needs as entrepreneurs.

Older contingent resource-based theory suggests that innovation is greater in competitive and small markets, and in environments that do not demand extensive production assets (Brush and Artz, 1999; Wernerfelt, 1984). More recent empirical work from South Asia (Sri Lanka) extends this to demonstrate that an ability to mobilise scarce resources is more important to success in new venturing than innovative ideas, and that most important of all is an ability to extract value from social networks (Kodithuwakku and Rosa, 2002). This has negative implications for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan insofar as their competition is systemically high (*vis-à-vis* men), their markets small, and their production assets limited; moreover, their access to networks of social

capital is greatly impeded, specifically by ‘Pardah’ and ‘Izzat’ across all social strata apart from the bourgeoisie— which in turn limits their access to other forms of capital.

A less arcane view can be found in the competency-based approach that is also grounded in the social context of entrepreneurship. Chandler and Jansen (1992), for example, identify three essential competencies for superior performance: entrepreneurial, managerial and technical-functional. Building on this idea, and the notion that the social context conditions the development of competencies, our own research in Pakistan takes up the theoretical challenge of investigating entrepreneurial competencies within a specific social context that is constrained by aspects of tradition.

2.2 *Women’s Entrepreneurship*

The theoretical paradox between entrepreneurial competences and Pakistani traditions as they relate to women can also be contextualised by considering something of what we know about women’s entrepreneurship.

Research reveals that women’s entrepreneurial activities make a significant contribution to the development of communities, regions, and countries (Brush *et al.*, 2002; Dionco-Adetayo, 2005). Establishment and development of women-owned enterprises not only contribute to overall economic, political, and social development but also play a vital role in women’s liberation and empowerment to achieve their individual (personal) goals and ambitions.

Starting and operating a business entails considerable risk and effort, especially for the entrepreneur who creates and builds it from scratch, taking all the responsibilities for start-up and day-to-day management with the corresponding risks and gains (Hisrich and Peters, 1998). These risks are even greater for women entrepreneurs who not only encounter all the usual business problems irrespective of gender but also must tackle issues associated with being a woman in a male dominated arena (Bates, 2002). Despite a number of initiatives designed to stimulate women’s entrepreneurship, relatively few women start and develop their own businesses (Carter, 2000, Carter

and Rosa, 1998). Many researchers (Birley, 1989; Brush *et al.*, 2002; Brush and Hisrich, 1999; Hisrich and Peters, 1998) have revealed profound gender differences in both women's experience of business ownership and the performance of women-owned firms, and in the effects of gender on the 'self-image' of entrepreneurs (Verheul *et al.*, 2005). The situation becomes more marked in a society where women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men due to deeply-rooted discriminatory socio-cultural values and traditions, embedded particularly in the institutional support mechanisms.

2.3 *Women's entrepreneurship in developing Islamic societies*

There has been much work done on issues relating to gender and economic empowerment in developing Islamic societies—much of it political and sociological, and some in economics, development, and management studies. Without widening our field of enquiry too far, we note the influential work of (Mernissi, 1987), whose virtually pioneering book from 1975 and revised edition of 1987 continue to resonate in debates about the context of women's roles in activities dominated by men, including entrepreneurship. Moghaddam (1994) takes a less sociological, more political approach to similar issues. The work of Haleh Afshar spans many years of enquiry into the role of women in Islamic areas of the developing world (Afshar, 1985, 1998; Afshar and Barrientos, 1999), although entrepreneurship is not a prime focus. Mahnaz Afkhami presents economic empowerment as a human right throughout much of her work on women in Muslim societies (Afkhami, 1995, 1997), but this is only one of many other important issues covered.

More recently, some researchers have taken a general view of entrepreneurship in Islamic societies, and some have concentrated on women: (Sinha, 2005; Tambunan, 2009) focus on developing women entrepreneurs throughout South Asia, and (Hossain, 2006) surveys the literature on entrepreneurs in Bangladesh with a special section on women.

There is a general critique of such studies, however. Culturally detailed analysis risks explaining specific phenomena as general principles, or "favouring individual explanations". In short, what works in Bangladesh may very well not apply in Pakistan. The consequence of this is that "social

and institutional aspects, which could affect conditions for entrepreneurship for both men and women—but perhaps differently for men than for women—remain undertheorized” (Ahl, 2006). This paper does not address that lack directly, but in assembling some additional data from an under-researched area attempts to add to the foundations for further work, both theoretical and empirical.

2.4 *Women’s entrepreneurship in Pakistan*

Here there is very little literature, but it is worth considering what aspects of women’s entrepreneurship in Islamic societies can be applied in the context of Pakistan. Goheer (2002) recommends improving women’s bargaining power, a useful skill for entrepreneurs. The immigrant perspective is examined in Dhaliwal (1998, 2000a, 2000b), who looks at South Asian women in the UK. The most widely cited source (Shabbir and Di Gregorio, 1996) investigates structural factors influencing Pakistani women’s decisions to start a business, but the study is small: 33 women were interviewed during a training programme, of which only 16 started a business; (see also Shabbir, 1995). Findings show women starting businesses to achieve personal free, security and satisfaction, with start-up decisions based on internal and external structural factors. While interesting, the conclusions are not comprehensive; this information is perhaps more useful for *promoting* women’s entrepreneurship in Pakistan than for designing training programmes to improve women’s entrepreneurial competences. Similarly, Roomi and Parrott (2008) look at barriers to women’s entrepreneurship in Pakistan, beyond the specific effects of Islamic tradition, but their recommendations to enable further development are policy-oriented instead of relating mainly to education or training.

In spite of these research initiatives, there is scant data on how best to achieve effective training for women entrepreneurs—what works in Pakistan and what does not. Though this paper cannot address that deficiency directly, it does aim to step forward by establishing the general value of a women-only training environment in Pakistan.

2.5 *Training and women entrepreneurs*

Entrepreneurial talent exists in all human beings but its emergence depends upon creating awareness, providing motivational factors and building self-confidence in addition to acquiring management skills for tackling problems and calculating risks in running day-to-day business operations and development (Allen and Truman, 1993). Research suggests that these skills can be developed in humans by imparting training and providing on-the-job assistance (Carter and Anderson, 2001; Gorman *et al.*, 1997; McMullen and Long, 1987) that result in the establishment and development of new enterprises. However, lack of access to training and advisory services is one of the main reasons often pin-pointed to explain the non-existence, failure and/or under-performance of women entrepreneurs (Brown *et al.*, 2002; Brush and Hisrich, 1999, 2002; Singh and Vinnicombe 2003). Moreover, the wrong sorts of training and support can be ineffective, especially when they fail to achieve access to social capital or cannot operate properly within larger social institutions (Chrisman *et al.*, 2005). In a field of endeavour where relationships are crucial to success, and where social institutions greatly influence the establishment and facilitation of relationships, any blockage to these forces can undermine chances of success: ‘Relationships between individuals are moulded and regulated by institutions. Thus ... some political and institutional settings are more conducive to entrepreneurship than others’ (Minniti, 2004: 637). These factors are counterproductive for women in some Islamic societies such as Pakistan where social and familial control over women’s right of choice, their economic dependence on men, and restrictions on their mobility determine differential access of males and females to education and other training opportunities to pursue entrepreneurial goals (Ahmed, 1992). Moreover, since most education and training in Pakistan are gender-segregated, it is neither culturally nor socially inappropriate to offer women-only entrepreneurship training.

There are examples of women-only training programmes from many parts of the world similar to Pakistan in some ways: university programmes in India, World Bank programmes in Yemen, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, social enterprise initiatives in Saudi Arabia, a women-only MBA

programme in the city of Luton in the UK which has a large population of immigrant Pakistanis, etc.¹ While we benchmarked our own training programme against some of these, it is worth stressing again that our research was not conducted with a view to assessing which specific training methods work for women in Pakistan and which do not. This would be valuable information indeed, but our aim in this instance was to assess the general idea of women-only training first, before moving on to an investigation about specifics—because there is sufficient ambiguity about the validity of women-only learning environments in the literature, and because almost no sources directly consider environments where gender-segregated training is normative.

2.6 *Conclusion of Literature Review*

There is extensive basis in theory and growing empirical evidence that the social context of entrepreneurship and of training is a determining factor on the development of entrepreneurial competences. More specifically, there is also much to suggest from theory and empirical work that this is true in different, specific ways for women entrepreneurs. Finally, this body of theory and empirical support implies a particular relevance to women entrepreneurs in socially constrained Islamic societies.

In light of these readings, we offer the following interrelated propositions concerning women's entrepreneurship in Pakistan. The first concerns barriers to women's entrepreneurship and the second concerns means of overcoming those barriers.

- 1:** Women in Pakistan face particular barriers to becoming entrepreneurs: socio-cultural barriers (Izzat, Pardah), barriers to capital (financial, social), and barriers to the development of entrepreneurial capacity (education, training).
- 2:** Each barrier can be reduced by women-only training in entrepreneurial competences.

¹ (India) www.nmims.edu/etw.programme/
(Yemen and Afghanistan) <http://www.businessedge-me.com/cms.php?id=5>
(Saudi) <http://womenentrepreneursgrowglobal.org/about/>
(Luton, UK) <http://www.beds.ac.uk/departments/strategy/cwe>

The sections below report empirical evidence illustrating these propositions. Though preliminary, this evidence nonetheless suggests that further, more rigorous testing will be worthwhile.

3. Research Methodology

The empirical phase of this research consisted of three parts: 1) assessing the training needs of potential women entrepreneurs, through a questionnaire with 256 respondents and in-depth interviews, 2) a training intervention involving 77 participants of the previous 256, and 3) follow-up interviews with participants administered 18 months later, involving 70 respondents out of the previous 77—as summarised in the table below:

Insert table 1 about here

The first phase of the study was carried out in five major cities of Pakistan: Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, and Rawalpindi/Islamabad. 200 names of women entrepreneurs were randomly sampled from lists at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Export Promotion Bureau, the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, the First Women’s Bank, WEXNet-2001, and local directories and yellow pages. The sample was increased by including 56 women registered as potential entrepreneurs with the same business support agencies.

Random sampling was employed to minimise biases in the collection of data—although it must be acknowledged that the sample is not representative of a fully broad social spectrum and tends toward the upper and middle classes, as can be seen in table 2. For example, most if not all respondents are apparently literate, and most are married. Moreover, the extent to which this latter point is significant—insofar as husbands support, advise or even underwrite their wives’ entrepreneurial activity—has not been explored. Another acknowledged limitation in the study also concerns granularity of data, or its degree of detail and precision: using a joint sample from the

largest cities in the entrepreneurial environment restricts visibility of the sectors and types of enterprises being studied. More detailed research controlling for more specific factors is envisioned for the future.

A structured interview method based on the questionnaire with a pre-determined set of questions was designed to assess the training needs of the 256 existing and potential women entrepreneurs, using a mixture of scaled, multiple choice, rank-order and open-ended items. Detailed, in-depth, one-to-one meetings were conducted by the lead author to enable participants to discuss what was important for them, including their perceptions and feelings regarding support mechanisms for capacity-building among women entrepreneurs. In addition to the improvement of their entrepreneurial skills, respondents were asked about the actions needed for capacity-building, with responses measured on the Likert scale.

Based on these responses, a women-only entrepreneurship training programme was designed and developed covering skills both hard (management, marketing, selling, finance) and soft (self-awareness, confidence building, and networking). 77 women in Karachi and Lahore were selected at random from the 256 original respondents, and invited to be trained for three weeks in the pilot project; of these 77, 65 were already running their own businesses and 12 were aspiring entrepreneurs. The sub-set was selected according to the same random-sampling method as the original set, in an effort to make each sample representative of the other; no tests were conducted to ensure this conclusively, an acknowledged limitation of the study, but availability constraints made it impossible to achieve a more precisely targeted sub-sample.

Eighteen months after attending the training module, 70 participants were interviewed to assess the impact of the training. The original 12 aspiring entrepreneurs were all among this group. Five (42%) had started their own business, three (25%) married and could not pursue their careers as entrepreneurs, and the remaining four (33%) were no longer interested in self-employment because of other work or domestic responsibilities. All participants in the training were asked to rate their understanding and knowledge of their learning objectives from the first phase. See table 3 for means

reported after the training module. The rationale for conducting interviews after eighteen months derived from the firm evaluation framework of Jack and Anderson (1990: 10), according to whom ‘time plays a crucial role in raising awareness among participants’, and one-to-two years after attending training is the most suitable time to determine the entrepreneurial position sought and obtained, as well as change/survival in reputation and innovation level of established firms.

In the third phase, the impact of the training on women’s entrepreneurship was measured by the researchers as the dependent variable, and operationalised by indicators of improvement in entrepreneurial characteristics, entrepreneurial management skills, technical skills and venture performance, using measures adopted from prior research (Carter, 2000; Johnson and Storey, 1993; Kalleberg and Leicht, 1991; Rosa *et al.*, 1996) to evaluate the impact of the training program.

After gathering data by these means, only a preliminary analysis was conducted. In this paper, we indicate where the data support the original propositions, and where they do not, and suggest where more rigorous research might bear fruit. A qualitative analysis of final-stage survey responses, for example, might reveal greater subtleties than we explore here—where our main aim is to gather data and identify some broad outlines of the analytical challenges.

In short, the general intent of the empirical phase was to identify the specific challenges that women in Pakistan face in becoming entrepreneurs by conducting a field survey of training needs; to design and use training sessions to present various tactics for overcoming those obstacles; and to assess the impact of that training. The results of each section of the empirical phase are presented and analysed in the sections that follow.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Field survey of training needs

In the first phase of the project, challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Pakistan were explored, and several factors were identified with greater precision than had been suggested through theoretical investigation, notably educational opportunity and work experience; other factors such as marital

status and age, though worth considering, have not been analysed here in the interests of maintaining focus.

In general, respondents perceived learning in general as crucial to their success as entrepreneurs. The nature of this demand can be deduced from the data shown in table 2, noting specifically education and work experience.

Insert table 2 about here

This shows that educational opportunity was an important factor for Pakistani women to take the plunge and start their own businesses. 82% of the respondents were at least high school graduates, 52.7% earned their bachelor degree and 15.2% completed their post-graduate degrees. Interestingly, most of them (64%) had no formal business education: only 12% and 10% of them had achieved Bachelor and Master degrees in business management respectively, 11% had had an opportunity to attend a short course or two, and a mere 3% had a diploma. Work experience was another major factor conditioning women's knowledge of running a business. Notably, 39% of respondents had no experience at all, and 24% had less than one year; less than a third had three-to-five years, and only 3% had more than ten years of work experience. In line with our first proposition, respondents perceived barriers to becoming entrepreneurs in the absence of work experience and/or education—and looked to training to overcome those barriers.

Education of entrepreneurs has been repeatedly cited as an effective way to reduce small business failures (Carter and Anderson, 2001; Garavan and O'Cinnéide, 1994). The women here surveyed perceived a need to be taught the skills and tools necessary for operating efficiently and avoiding failure in the early stages of their businesses. In light of the fact that 48% started their own business for security reasons (to ensure or improve their financial security), it seems that their social and economic survival depended on their professional activities. But since a period of formal or sustained education would entail very high opportunity costs (inability to generate income), a more

pragmatic form of learning would be more appropriate. To this end, and with a view to confirming our second proposition, we proposed a training module—one specifically tailored to the learning objectives of the socio-cultural context of Pakistani women.

4.2 Training module design

Building on the respondents' perceived need for learning in general, the next phase in the project involved more extensive interviews to explore the details of participants' specific learning objectives, and to gain an understanding necessary for the design and development a training module appropriate to Islamic women entrepreneurs. Interviews also uncovered some of the hindrances to learning, specifically with a view to addressing both propositions connecting socio-cultural environment and the acquisition of entrepreneurial competences. In addition, respondents were asked to suggest specific actions for making this capacity building exercise more likely to succeed.

Respondents describe their learning objectives and prioritize their needs for different aspects of entrepreneurship training. Personal traits, entrepreneurial characteristics, business management skills and technical skills were the proposed variables, with further sub-variables in each category, as shown below in table 3.

Insert table 3 about here

With respect to personal traits, respondents rated independence (4.74) and self confidence (4.73) as the two traits most needed for the establishment and development of their businesses, followed by networking (4.58), inner control (4.51), and persuasion (4.43). During interviews, respondents pinpointed the deeply-rooted discriminatory socio-cultural values and traditions, embedded particularly in the institutional support mechanisms, as barriers for women in building confidence and independence. Some respondents mentioned the non-homogeneity and considerable diversity of

status of women in the society, and described the presence of networking only in the economically prosperous or highly educated strata of society.

In the entrepreneurial characteristics category, opportunity recognition (4.71) and demand for quality and efficiency (4.34) were followed by innovation (4.29), calculated risk taking (4.14), persistence (3.93), and information seeking (3.93). Respondents expressed their concern for finding opportunities in a limited 'traditional' market, given their restricted mobility and permission to interact with men. As their businesses grow, most women think that the most difficult challenge is to deal with the labour force, most of which consists of uneducated men who are often rude and rough and not ready to accept the authority of women. Women must be strong and stern to deal with men whose socio-cultural values prevent them from accepting the same treatment from a woman as they would from a man. This was the area where the women wanted to learn how to improve their effectiveness in interacting with men. Strategies proposed for dealing with this problem included developing ventures based on female labour where possible, as suggested in other work on women's entrepreneurship in other developing Islamic countries (Bornstein, 1997; Minto, 2004; Yunus, 1999).

In business management skills, respondents rated financial management skills including securing capital, forecasting, accounting and budgeting as the highest learning objective with a mean score of 4.77. The result confirms the findings of many researchers (Jennings and Hawley, 1996; Johnson and Storey, 1993; Hisrich and Brush, 1984) that financial management and financial planning are the major obstacles for entrepreneurs all over the world. Business planning and organization (4.47), marketing and sales (4.29), and human resource management (3.89) were described as the major learning objectives.

The main objectives for technical skills were non-verbal communication skills (4.80), written and oral communication skills (4.40), and management information systems (3.95). It is likely that respondents perceive non-verbal skills as more easily available and also more 'available' than skills dependent on relatively scarce technology.

After training, some interview responses show negative results—although in most cases this is probably a change relative to rises in the perceived importance of other factors. In Traits, for example, the importance of independence is seen to decline relative to networking; this is interesting if it implies that social capital, rather than personal capital, is perceived as more important; that working well with others, rather than being heroically self-sufficient is important for entrepreneurship; (see also Aldrich, 1989). Among Entrepreneurial Characteristics, the perceived importance of a demand for quality and of innovation falls below persistence—a decline that is perhaps not absolute but instead relative to the increase in persistence. The more women believe in themselves and persist in the pursuit of goals, whatever they may be, the less important it is to have an emphatically superior or innovative product. Among Business and Management Skills, finance and business planning skills declined relative to marketing and sales—again implying priority being placed on social, as opposed to technical skills. Nonetheless, an anomalous result emerges in the responses on Technical Skills, where we see a big drop in the perceived importance of non-verbal communication skills; perhaps this was an aspect where the training was weak, and there was no sense of achieving new skills, or improvement on existing ones. Also, since there is a sharp rise in the perceived importance of production skills (from bottom before to top after), the strongly declining result for non-verbal communications may be merely relative. Until a deeper qualitative analysis is conducted, these results cannot be explained fully.

Respondents were asked to describe the hindrances in achieving their learning objectives. They expressed their concerns about the mixing of genders and spatial mobility due to ‘Pardah’ and ‘Izzat’, and named these as the key reasons for not attending the available mixed-gender training programs (see table 4). They added that restrictions on interaction with men limited opportunities to acquire business management and technical skills as there were very few institutions/organisations providing training only for women. Following non-availability of women-only training programs (4.80) and spatial mobility (4.70), were practical applicability of the training (4.55), cost of the training programs (4.40), and lack of guidance and counselling (4.38).

Insert table 4 about here

When asked their opinion on the actions needed for capacity-building, again respondents named women-only business training programs (4.68) as highest, followed by better spatial mobility (4.55), practically applicable training programs (4.54), and free/subsidised training programs (4.41). Most believed that their society would not ‘frown upon’ their attendance at the women-only training program if it was mindful of socio-cultural traditions, norms and values. Such programmes were perceived as having the potential to help women clarify their entrepreneurial ambitions, and to recognise their entrepreneurial strengths and weaknesses.

Pragmatic training was the underlying issue emphasised by the respondents. Women were not interested in the various aspects of setting up and running a business from a merely theoretical perspective. They expected either ‘education *for* enterprise’, to equip themselves with practical skills required for business start up and management, and to get ready for the preparation of a viable business plan, or ‘education *in* enterprise’, focussing on ensuring the growth and future development of the business (Henry *et al.*, 2005a: 102). Evidently, their need was to acquire, enhance and upgrade their entrepreneurial skills through training in a culturally applicable, socially acceptable, mutually supportive and economically viable environment.

4.3 *Impact of Training Module*

Table 3 above reports means from the impact assessment of the Training Module. In the personal traits category, the participants rated the training quite high for its impact on networking (4.46), self-confidence (4.43) and independence (4.00). Many respondents echoed one participant’s remark that she found the module ‘a good starting point for a journey of self awareness and confidence-building’. Many felt that they ‘started clearing hurdles’ when they were sure what they wanted to do in their lives. They lauded the one-to-one mentoring component of the programme in which every senior

entrepreneur adopted a junior entrepreneur for six months; this not only created an opportunity for the partners to share and learn from each other but also opened the doors of informal networking. Thus notably, as the women's social and cultural norms precluded them from participating in conventional networks to establish and develop their businesses, the training program supported theoretical predictions and proved to be a wonderful opportunity for women to build appropriate social capital and interact with others who could help them in the growth of their businesses. One of the important findings from the third phase was the fact that the mean score for improvement in networking after the module was the highest in the personal traits category, at 4.46. Interestingly, prior to the training, networking ranked third among personal traits, below independence and self confidence; the module clearly created a shift in the perception of the relative importance of these entrepreneurial competences. (See also table 6, below.)

Respondents felt a marked increase in their entrepreneurial characteristics such as opportunity recognition (4.48), persistence (4.48), demand for quality and efficiency (4.36), calculated risk taking (4.21) and innovation (4.19). The business management skills they felt equipped with after attending the program were marketing and sales (4.46), financial management (4.36), planning and organizing (4.34), and decision making (4.05). Overall, when asked whether the training helped them in achieving their learning aims and objectives, respondents rated the module 4.08 on a scale of 5.

In addition to measuring the fulfilment of learning objectives, it was also important to gauge the extent to which the women-only training module added value to 'what was already achieved' by the participants using objective and subjective measures—i.e. the impact of the training on ventures already started before the training. This involved measuring economic impact such as increase in number of employees, growth in employees, sales turnover, value of capital assets, geographical range of markets, tax registration, *et cetera*, as well as entrepreneurial impact such as the desire for growth, the ownership of multiple businesses, and the ability of the business to meet business and

domestic needs, etc. In table 5, the frequency figures indicate respondents' perceived improvement on the given variables:

Insert table 5 about here

An impressive number of entrepreneurs perceived increases in various performance indicators (although the data do not, it must be stressed, report on actual changes in these indicators): there were perceived changes in employee numbers (35.38%), sales/revenue (78.46%), profit (64.61%), number of customers (60.00%) and value of capital assets (27.69%). There were also changes in the perception of proxy performance measures such as increased internal investment (63.07%) and increase in use of IT (80.00%), showing a substantial change relative to the entrepreneur's own prior performance perceptions. Over 49% of participants expressed increasing desire for growth, 69.23% were more keen on demand for quality and efficiency, and 29.23 % were relying more on sub-contracting—all of which shows a marked increase in entrepreneurial confidence.

However some measures, such as increase in external investment (18.46%) and geographical range of markets (33.84%) did not show results as strong as others. One reason for this might be bureaucratic regulations and procedures, as well as harassment by government authorities for bribes, especially for entrepreneurs who are in the tax net; the procedural difficulties created by these institutions not only discourage prospective entrepreneurs of any gender from establishing businesses or branches, but also create disincentives for entrepreneurs who have already established some business units from establishing more; as far as women are concerned, even access to black-market social capital, so to speak, seems to be limited by 'Pardah' and 'Izzat'. Similarly, only 7.69% were now owners of multiple businesses. This result suggests limited entrepreneurial goals among women in Pakistan, perhaps because of socio-cultural factors that restrict them to one or two lines of activity. Women entrepreneurs in Pakistan seem to prefer not to diversify: most of them are married with children and already juggling between the enterprise on the one hand and home and children on the

other. More to the point, as entrepreneurs they are coping with these additional burdens in a much less supportive society. In short, obstacles to being a woman entrepreneur, both perceived and actual, are repeated and compounded with each new venture.

It is interesting to observe which perceived impact figures rose more than others (see table 6 below): revenues, profits, number of customers and internal investment grew considerably, while number of employees, capital assets, external investment, geographical range and formality did not grow as much. The training module seems to have had a larger impact on the perception of the efficiency of entrepreneurial operations than on the perception of size and scale.

As a final indicator of the impact of the training module, a telling result comes in the response to a single question asked both before and after. Before training, the desire to achieve an ‘overall understanding of how to start one’s own business’ was rated 3.17 out of a possible 5. After training, the sense of *having achieved* such an understanding was rated 4.12 out of 5—a jump of nearly 20%. This, and the other comparative results in table 6, indicate that women perceived a strong benefit from the training in terms of overall entrepreneurial capacity-building.

Insert table 6 about here

4.4 *Summary of findings and discussion*

These results support our second proposition that women-only entrepreneurship training can help to overcome barriers felt by women in Pakistan, especially those barriers specified in our first proposition. Notably, women’s exposure to a socially acceptable learning environment generates an awareness of themselves and their potential economic contribution to society. The value of women-only entrepreneurship training programs therefore highlights the economic importance of women’s entrepreneurial activities, and draws attention toward personal, individual, institutional, and organizational factors that can positively influence the performance of women business owners and their ventures.

5. Conclusions and implications

Although Orser and Riding (2003) have criticised gender-only initiatives for reinforcing rather than eliminating gender stereotypes, inadequately preparing women to compete in wider markets, and promoting poor investments in potentially low yield businesses, by contrast Singh and Vinnicombe (2003: 294) have emphasised ‘the important role of women-only training in the development of females in the next generation of leaders and in the enhancement of their careers’. The results of this research from Pakistan seem to confirm these latter ideas, in the context of an Islamic society, and to suggest that there is a considerable need for women-only training programs and other capacity-building activities—although more extensive work is necessary, in a wider variety of Islamic and non-Islamic societies and in different geographical regions, to confirm the implications fully.

Internationally, research suggests numerous gender differences among business owners at various levels: personal (being taken seriously, lack of respect, readiness of men to do business with women), individual (motivation to business ownership, owners’ occupational background, time management, planning, and delegation, etc.), and institutional (access to advisory and training services, program eligibility criteria, and terms of lending, etc.)—(Brown *et al.*, 2002; Brush and Hisrich, 2002; Carter and Anderson, 2001). By implication, these differences become compounded in some Islamic societies where women are further discriminated against and subjugated due to socio-cultural values and traditions in the name of religion. Though in such societies it is difficult for women to embark upon economic initiatives, those who are brave, courageous or fortunate enough to do so suffer from the lack of access to (and control over) capital, especially social capital, land, business premises, information and technology, production inputs, and above all capacity-building opportunities such as training or advisory services to run and sustain their initiatives. Their restricted interaction with men apparently limits their opportunities to acquire business management and technical skills and, consequently, the full development of their entrepreneurial potential.

However, it seems evident that women-only training can provide women in certain social contexts with rare opportunities to learn the skills and tools to run and manage their own businesses and to share the specific challenges that they face as women; to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses; to look at and be inspired by the success of other women born and bred in the same society and culture; and to satiate their quest for excellence in an encouraging and socially-appropriate environment in which they can test their own experiences against those of other women.

Also, the theoretical positions and (certainly preliminary) empirical data presented here seem to indicate that most women entrepreneurs who are socially constrained in some way choose small, locally-focused businesses in low-tech industries and pursue business ideas that are not scalable. Those who are in growth-oriented businesses apparently still suffer from lack of access to (and control over) capital, land, business premises, information and technology, production inputs, appropriate child care, qualifications and/or experience, and notably, appropriate training facilities and assistance from business development agencies.

Another implication for future research is that improper accumulation and utilisation of social capital hinder women in general (not only Muslim women) by blocking access to appropriate decision-making circles, which in turn restricts their probability of accessing critical management and financing resources. More specifically, there is a suggestion that the same cause hinders their access and success rate with sources of finance. These findings also suggest that technical training and management experience, in addition to appropriate support by business development agencies (including venture investors) can make a considerable difference in the performance of women entrepreneurs.

In summary, the main questions motivating this research were: 1) what are the specific training needs of existing and potential women entrepreneurs in an Islamic society such as Pakistan, and 2) what topics will impart the basic management skills for women entrepreneurs to become more effective?

These questions were addressed through theoretical analysis of literature on women entrepreneurs, and through questionnaires and interviews with women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. We also posited two interrelated propositions on the nature of the particular obstacles faced by Pakistani women entrepreneurs and on means of overcoming those obstacles. As a result of these investigations, a series of women-only training modules was designed to begin testing the ideas empirically. In the design and subsequent assessment of a women-only training programme (achieved largely by interviews with participants, before and then eighteen months after the delivery of the programme) the findings demonstrate specific and measureable benefits perceived by women entrepreneurs; differences between women-only training and regular training programmes; the effectiveness of the skill-sets imparted during the training; and—ultimately—increased potential to realise economic goals in women’s businesses.

Significantly more rigorous testing of these data will be necessary to substantiate the propositions, but through repeated longitudinal observations that have already been made there seems to be good reason to pursue more developed empirical research.

These findings come to the general conclusion that an indigenously designed, developed and conducted training module for women only, based on women’s specific needs, not only provides an opportunity to build self-esteem and confidence, but also plays an important role in the improvement of their ventures’ performance. Moreover, the post-training performance of these ventures confirms a very positive impact from the training. Given the right support, proper capacity-building, and conducive environment, women entrepreneurs in Pakistan can improve their success rate and their economic contribution.

Table 1: Summary of empirical research

What	When	Who	How
1. Field Survey	2002	potential and current women entrepreneurs: 256 respondents	questionnaire + interviews
2. Training Module	2003	77 participants (of the previous 256)	women-only workshops
3. Follow-up Survey	2004 18 months later	70 respondents (of the previous 77)	interviews

Table 2: Structural profile of the respondents

	Variables	Frequency	%
Age	Below 30	40	15
	30 – 39	121	47
	40 - 49	72	28
	Above 50	25	9
Marital Status	Single	20	8
	Married	197	77
	Divorced	28	11
	Widow	11	4
Number of Children	One	38	15
	Two	53	21
	Three	110	43
	Four	49	19
	More than four	6	2
Highest Education Level	No Education	24	18
	Secondary	58	23
	Bachelors	135	52
	Masters	39	15
Formal Business Education	No Business Education	163	64
	Certificate/short courses	29	11
	Diploma	07	03
	Degree	31	12
	Post-graduate	26	10
Work/Business Management Experience	No experience	99	39
	Less than 1 year	63	24
	1-3 years	31	12
	3-5 years	37	15
	5-10 years	19	7
	More than 10 years	7	3
Reasons for being an Entrepreneur	Freedom seekers	52	20
	Security seekers	123	48
	Satisfaction seekers	81	32
Enterprise Level	Pre-start	56	22
	Existence/survival	154	60
	Growth	46	18

Source: Field Survey 2002 (base=256)

Table 3: Distribution of respondents on their learning objectives before and after the women-only training programme

Variables	Scores										Before		After	
	5		4		3		2		1		Mean	STD	Mean	STD
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%				
Personal traits														
Inner control	156	60.1	86	33.6	14	5.5					4.51	0.60	3.74	<i>1.10</i>
Independence	212	82.8	29	11.3	7	2.7	8	3.1			4.73	0.66	4.00	<i>1.04</i>
Self-confidence	219	85.5	22	8.6	6	2.3	7	2.7			4.74	0.61	4.43	<i>0.65</i>
Networking	173	67.6	54	21.1	31	12.1					4.58	0.70	4.46	<i>0.67</i>
Persuasion	156	60.1	72	28.1	20	7.8	8	3.1			4.43	0.77	3.77	<i>1.00</i>
Entrepreneurial characteristics														
Information seeking	98	38.3	76	29.7	54	21.1	28	10.1			3.93	1.00	3.79	<i>0.97</i>
Opportunity recognition	222	86.7	28	10.1	6	2.3					4.80	0.42	4.48	<i>0.56</i>
Innovation	129	50.4	78	30.5	43	16.8	6	2.3			4.29	0.83	4.19	<i>0.85</i>
Risk taking	143	55.9	54	21.1	28	10.1	22	8.6	9	3.5	4.14	1.13	4.21	<i>0.81</i>
Persistence	123	48	31	12.1	72	28.1	22	8.6	8	3.1	3.93	1.17	4.48	<i>0.99</i>
Demands quality / efficiency	134	52.3	77	30.1	45	17.6					4.34	0.76	4.36	<i>0.75</i>
Knowledge of essential business management skills														
Understanding 'how to start one's own business'	77	30.1	79	30.9	72	28.1	22	8.6	6	2.3	3.17	1.21	4.12	<i>0.90</i>
Preparation of business plan	161	2.9	73	28.6	22	8.6					4.55	0.65	3.99	<i>0.94</i>
Finance (funding, forecasting, budgeting, accounting)	197	77	59	23							4.77	0.42	4.36	<i>0.66</i>
Planning & organizing	165	64.5	47	18.4	44	17.2					4.47	0.77	4.34	<i>0.67</i>
Goal setting & Decision making	124	48.4	29	11.3	53	20.7	50	20			3.89	1.21	4.05	<i>0.81</i>
Marketing & sales	156	60.1	52	20.3	30	11.2	18	7			4.29	0.93	4.46	<i>0.65</i>
HR mgt	112	43.8	56	21.9	31	2.1	45	17.6	12	4.7	3.82	1.26	4.01	<i>0.84</i>
Knowledge of technical skills														
Written/oral communications	154	60.2	54	21.1	45	17.6	3	1.2			4.40	0.82	3.82	<i>1.07</i>
Non-verbal communications	201	79.4	47	18.4	8	3.2					4.80	0.50	3.23	<i>1.27</i>
Productions	111	43.4	22	8.6	30	11.2	54	21.1	26	10.2	3.46	1.46	3.89	<i>1.24</i>
Operations	121	47.3	50	19.5	28	10.1	57	22.3			3.89	1.21	3.62	<i>1.11</i>
MIS	65	25.4	121	47.3	62	24.2	8	3.1			3.95	0.79		

Before Source: Field Survey 2002 (base=256)

After Source: Field Survey 2004 (base=70)

Table 4: Distribution of respondents on hindrances in achieving their learning objectives

Scores	5		4		3		2		1		
Variables	Very High		High		Average		Quite a bit		Not at all		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Lack of business training programs	77	30.1	79	0.9	72	28.1	22	8.6	6	2.3	3.77
Non-availability of women-only training	205	80.1	51	9.9	----	----	----	----	----	----	4.80
Cost of training programs	162	63.3	55	1.5	22	8.6	14	5.5	3	1.2	4.40
Spatial mobility (transport)	91	35.5	69	7.0	31	12.1	33	12.9	32	12.5	3.60
Spatial mobility ('Pardah'/ 'Izzat')	189	73.8	59	3.0	8	3.2	----	----	----	----	4.70
Lack of guidance and counselling	139	54.3	77	0.1	40	15.6	----	----	----	----	4.38
Practical applicability of training	161	62.9	73	8.6	22	8.6	----	----	----	----	4.55

Source: Field Survey 2002 (base=256)

Table 5: Distribution of respondents' perception of performance improvement following women-only training program

Perceived improvement on specific variables	Frequency	Percentage
Primary performance measures		
– Number of employees (increment)	23	35.38
– Revenue/sales (increment)	51	78.46
– Profit (increment)	42	64.61
– Value of capital assets (increment)	18	27.69
– Number of customers/client base (increment)	39	60.00
Proxy performance measures		
– External investment	12	18.46
– Internal investment	41	63.07
– Geographical range of markets	9	13.84
– Income tax registration	22	33.84
– Usage of information technology	52	80.00
Subjective and entrepreneurial performance measures		
– Desire for growth	32	49.23
– Ownership of multiple businesses	5	7.69
– Demand for quality and efficiency	45	69.23
– Sub-contracting	19	29.23
– Usage of technology	12	18.46

Source: Field Survey 2004 (base=70)

Table 6: Comparison of learning outcomes:
 desired *before* training (n=256) and perceived as achieved *after* training (n=70)

Personal Traits				
Before		After		
4.74	Independence	→	4.46	Networking
4.73	Self-confidence	→	4.43	Self-confidence
4.58	Networking	→	4.00	Independence
4.51	Inner control	→	3.77	Persuasion
4.43	Persuasion	→	3.74	Inner control

Comment: 'A good starting point for a journey of self-awareness and confidence building'

Entrepreneurial Characteristics				
Before		After		
4.71	Opportunity recognition	→	4.48	Opportunity recognition
4.34	Demand for quality	→	4.48	Persistence
4.29	Innovation	→	4.36	Demand for quality
4.14	Risk taking	→	4.21	Risk taking
3.93	Persistence	→	4.19	Innovation
3.93	Info seeking	→	3.79	Info seeking

Comment: 'started clearing most hurdles once sure what to do in life'
 [opportunity recognition and persistence]

Business and Management Skills				
Before		After		
4.77	Finance	→	4.46	Marketing / sales
4.47	Business planning	→	4.36	Finance
4.29	Marketing / sales	→	4.34	Business planning
3.89	Goal setting	→	4.05	Goal setting
3.82	HR management	→	4.01	HR management

Technical Skills				
Before		After		
4.80	Non-verbal comms	→	3.89	Production
4.40	Written/oral comms	→	3.82	Written/oral comms
3.95	MIS	→	3.62	Operations
3.89	Operations	→	3.23	Non-verbal comms
3.46	Production	→	No response	MIS

Overall understanding of 'how to start one's own business'	
Before	After
3.17	4.12

References

- Afkhami, M. (1995), *Faith and freedom: women's human rights in the muslim world*, I B Tauris, London.
- Afkhami, M. (1997), "Promoting Women's rights in the Muslim World", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 157-166.
- Afshar, H. (1985), *Women, Work, and Ideology in the Third World*, Tavistock Publications, London.
- Afshar, H. (1998), *Women and Empowerment: Illustrations from the Third World*, Macmillan Press, Basingstoke.
- Afshar, H. and Barrientos, S. (1999), *Women, Globalization, and Fragmentation in the Developing World*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Ahl, H. (2006), "Why Research on Women Entrepreneurs Needs New Directions", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp. 595 - 621.
- Ahmed, L. (1992), *Women and gender in Islam: historical roots of a modern game*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.
- Aldrich, H. (1989), "Networking among women entrepreneurs", in O. Hagan, C. Rivchun, D. Sexton (Eds.), *Women-owned businesses*, Praeger, New York.
- Aldrich, H. and Cliff, J. (2003), "The pervasive effects of family on entrepreneurship: towards a family embeddedness perspective", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp. 573-596.
- Allen, S. and Truman, C. (1993), *Women in Business: Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs*, Routledge Press, London.
- Baron, R. (2004), "The cognitive perspective: a valuable tool for answering entrepreneurship's basic "why" questions", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 221-239.
- Bates, T. (2002), "Restricted access to market characterizes women-owned businesses ", *Journal of Business Venturing* Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 313-324.
- Birley, S. (1989), "Female entrepreneurs: are they really any different?", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 32-37.
- Bornstein, D. (1997), *The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Brockner, J., Higgins, E. and Low, M. (2004), "Regulatory focus theory and the entrepreneurial process", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 203-220.
- Brown, S., Doyle, W., Lewis, H., Mallette, D. and Young, P. (2002), *Women Entrepreneurs in Canada in the 90s*, Business Development Bank of Canada, Montreal.
- Brush, C., Carter, N., Gatewood, E. and Greene, P. (2002), *The Diana Project, Women Business Owners and Equity Capital: The Myths Dispelled*, Kauffman Centre for Entrepreneurship, Wellesley, MA.
- Brush, C. and Hisrich, R. (1999), *Women-Owned Businesses: why do they matter?*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston.

- Brush, C. and Hisrich, R. (2002), *Women-owned Businesses: An Exploratory Study Comparing Factors Affecting Performance*, Research Institute for Small & Emerging Business, Inc., Washington.
- Brush, T. and Artz, K. (1999), "Toward a contingent resource-based theory", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 20, pp. 223-250.
- Carter, S. and Rosa, P. (1998), "The financing of male- and female-owned businesses", *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol 10, No. 3, pp. 225-241.
- Carter, S. (2000), "Gender and Enterprise", in S. Carter and D. Jones-Evans (Eds.), *Enterprise and Small Business: Principles, Practice and Policy*, Financial Times - Prentice Hall, London.
- Carter, S. and Anderson, S. (2001), *On the Move: Women and Men Business Owners in the United Kingdom*, The National Foundation of Women Business Owners, Washington.
- Chandler, G. and Jansen, E. (1992), "The founder's self-assessed competence and venture performance", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 223-236.
- Chiasson, M. and Saunders, C. (2005), "Reconciling diverse approaches to opportunity research using the structuration theory", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 747-767.
- Chrisman, J., McMullen, E. and Hall, J. (2005), "The influence of guided preparation on the long-term performance of new ventures", *Journal of New Business Ventures*, Vol. 20 No. 5, pp. 769-791.
- Dhaliwal, S. (1998), "Silent contributors: Asian female entrepreneurs and women in business", *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 463-474.
- Dhaliwal, S. (2000a), "Asian Female Entrepreneurs and Women in Business – an Exploratory Study", *Enterprise & Innovation Management Studies*, Vol. 2 No., pp. 207 - 216.
- Dhaliwal, S. (2000b), "Entrepreneurship – a learning process: the experiences of Asian female entrepreneurs and women in business", *Education + Training*, Vol. 42 No. 8, pp. 445 - 453
- Dionco-Adetayo, E. A. (2005), "Evaluation of Policy Implementation in Women Entrepreneurship Development", ICSB-2005 Conference, Washington, D. C.
- Drucker, P. (1985), *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, Harper and Row, New York, NY.
- Garavan, T. and O'Cinnéide, B. (1994), "Entrepreneurship education and training programmes: a review and evaluation", *Journal of European Industrial Training*, Vol. 18 No. 8, pp. 3-21.
- Giddens, A. (1984), *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge, Policy Press.
- Goheer, N. (2002), "Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan: a study to understand and improve their bargaining power", International Labor Organization.
- Gorman, G., Hanlon, D. and King, W. (1997), "Some research perspectives on entrepreneurship education, enterprise education and education for small business management: a ten year literature review", *International Small Business Journal*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 56-78.
- Hart, M., Greene, P., and Brush, C. (1997), "Leveraging Resources: Building and Organization on an Entrepreneurial Resource base", *Frontiers of Entrepreneurial Research*, Summer.

- Henry, C., Hill, F. and Leitch, C. (2005a), "Entrepreneurship education and training: can entrepreneurship be taught?", *Journal of Education + Training*, Vol. 47 No. 2, pp. 98-111.
- Henry, C., Hill, F. and Leitch, C. (2005b), "Entrepreneurship education and training: can entrepreneurship be taught?", *Journal of Education + Training*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 158-169.
- Hisrich, R. D. and Brush, C. G. (1984), "The woman entrepreneur: management skills and business problems", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 30-37.
- Hisrich, R. D. and Peters, M. P. (1998), *Entrepreneurship* (4 ed.), Irwin McGraw-Hill, Boston, MA.
- Hossain, D. M. (2006), "A Literature Survey on Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Bangladesh", *Southeast University Journal of Business Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 1.
- Jack, S. and Anderson, A. (2002), "The effects of embeddedness on the entrepreneurial process", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 17 No. 5, pp. 467-487.
- Jennings, P. L. and Hawley, D. (1996), "Designing effective training programmes", in 19th Institute of Small Business Affairs – Small Firms' National Conference, Birmingham.
- Johnson, S. and Storey, D. (1993), "Male and female entrepreneurs and their businesses", in Allen, S. and Truman, C. (Eds.), *Women in Business: Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs*, Routledge, London.
- Kalleberg, A. and Leicht, K. T. (1991), "Gender and organisational performance: determinants of small business survival and success", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 136-161.
- Kodithuwakku, S. and Rosa, P. (2002), "The entrepreneurial process and economic success if a constrained environment", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 17 No. 5, pp. 431-465.
- McMullan, E. and Long, W. (1987), "Entrepreneurship education in the nineties", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 261-275.
- Mernissi, F. (1987), *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Revised Edition ed.), Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.
- Minniti, M. (2004), "Entrepreneurial alertness and asymmetric information in a spin-glass model", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp. 637-658.
- Mintoo, A. A. (2004), *Bangladesh: Anatomy of Change*, The University Press Ltd., Dhaka.
- Moghaddam, V. M. (1994), *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*, Oxford University Press, Karachi.
- Mullins, J. (2003), *The New Business Road Test*, FT-Prentice Hall, London.
- Njeru, E. H. N. and Mjoka, J. M. (2001), "Women Entrepreneurs in Nairobi: the socio-cultural factors influencing their investment patterns", in Alila, P. O. and Pedersen, P. O. (Eds.), *Negotiating Social Space: East African Micro-Enterprises*, Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ and Asmara, Eritrea.
- Orser, B. and Riding, A. L. (2003), *Estimating the impact of a gender-based training program*, Carleton University, Canada.

- Papanek, H. (1982), "Purdah in Pakistan: seclusion and modern occupations for women", in Papanek, H. and Minault, G. (Eds.), *Separate Worlds*, Chanakya Publications, New Delhi.
- Roomi, M. and Parrott, G. (2008), "Barriers to Development and Progression of Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan", *Journal of Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 59-72.
- Rosa, P., Carter, S. and Hamilton, D. (1996), "Gender as a determinant of small business performance: Insights from a British study", *Small Business Economics*, Vol. 8, pp. 463-478.
- Say, J. B. (1830), *A Treatise on Political Economy*, (C. R. Prinsep, Trans.), (4 ed.), J. Grigg, Philadelphia.
- Schumpeter, J. (1951), *Essays: On Entrepreneurs, Innovations, Business Cycles, and the Evolution of Capitalism*, Addison-Wesley, Cambridge, MA.
- Shabbir, A. (1995), "How gender affects business start-up: evidence from Pakistan", *Small Enterprise Development*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 35-42.
- Shabbir, A. and Di Gregorio, S. (1996), "An examination of the relationship between women's personal goals and structural factors influencing their decision to start a business: the case of Pakistan", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 11 No. 6, pp. 507.
- Shaheed, F. (1990), *Pakistan's women: an analytical description*, SANJH, Lahore.
- Shane, S. and Venkataraman, S. (2000), "The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 25, pp. 217-226.
- Singh, V. and Vinnicombe, S. (2003), "Women-only management training: An essential part of women's leadership development", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 294-306.
- Sinhal, S. (2005), *Developing Women Entrepreneurs in South Asia: Issues, Initiatives and Experiences*, UNESCAP, Bangkok.
- Stevenson, H. (1983), *A Perspective on Entrepreneurship*, Harvard Business School Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Stevenson, H. and Gumpert, D. (1985), "The heart of entrepreneurship", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 63 No. 2, pp. 85-94.
- Tambunan, T. (2009), "Women entrepreneurship in Asian developing countries: their development and main constraints", *Journal of Development and Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 27-40.
- Timmons, J. (2003), *New Venture Creation: Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century*, McGraw-Hill, Boston.
- Verheul, I., Uhlaner, L. and Thurik, R. (2005), "Business accomplishments, gender and entrepreneurial self-image", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 483-518.
- Wernerfelt, B. (1984), "A resource-based view of the firm", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 5, pp. 171-180.
- Yunus, M. (1999), *Banker to the Poor*, Public Affairs, New York.