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Pure Play: Entrepreneurial Females in the Digital Era

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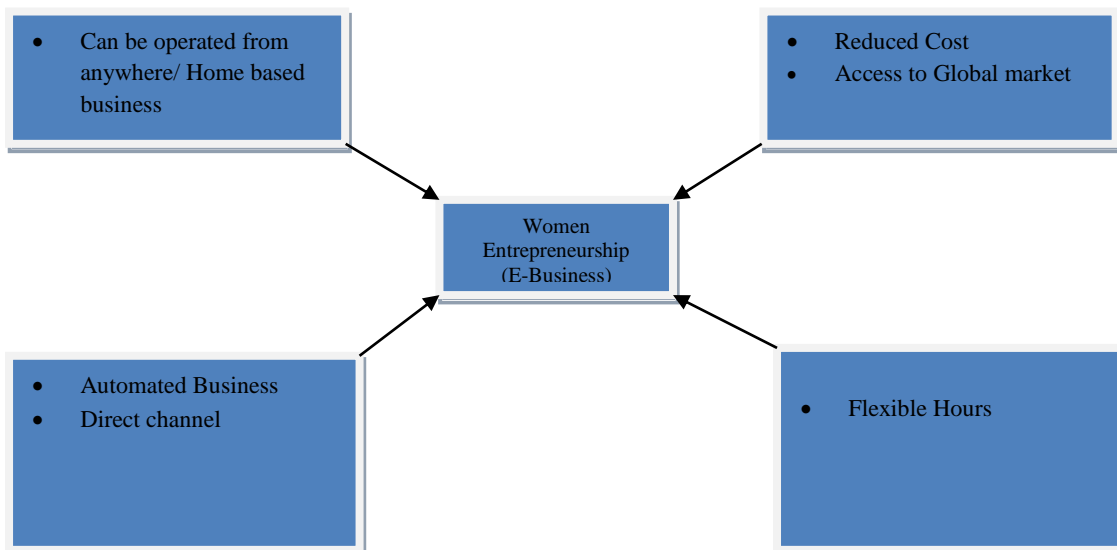
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## Research Highlights

ECommerce is getting rapid popularity worldwide due to number of associated benefits. The addition of word "electronic" to commerce and business opens a world of opportunities for people. Females constitute 50% of total population of the world (World Bank , 2018). However, their contribution in economic activities is low either due to family restrictions or labour/ distribution channel issues because of male chauvinism in many societies. Apart from them, specific problems are common to females all over the world regardless of their belongingness to any culture including family responsibilities, limited physical strength and lack of availability of finance in many countries. As an ebusiness signifies with low cost, automated business process, availability of direct channel, flexible hours and nonetheless independence from physical existence (Turban & King, 2016) therefore the research suggested application of ebusiness as prospective solution to the barriers for female entrepreneurship that was further confirmed by the results.

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## Graphical Abstract



## Research Objectives





The research focuses on accomplishment of multiple objectives. The study is conducted to identify the importance of females for economic growth of a country and to investigate the underlying causes of restricted growth of female entrepreneurship in less developed countries framing Pakistan. The economic growth of a country is not possible without the participation of a major part of population i.e. females. Females participation is restricted by so many factors including family, society, finance or their own physical strength. To ensure their participation, the attention is usually given to motivation building. The ineffectiveness of policies shows negligence towards actual barriers and lack of required facilitation to females. The need of the hour is to facilitate females to work in their own comfort zone and manage family and professional life simultaneously.

The research also meant to evaluate significance of pure virtual business in promoting entrepreneurship in less developed nations where availability of finance has always been a major issue (Berle, 1989) specially for females where the benefits of ebusiness are expected to resolve many other problems. The objective is to facilitate policy makers and Government institutions in identifying the actual barriers while making decision for promoting ecommerce and female entrepreneurship.

## Methodology

The research is an empirical study to reveal the covert barriers for female entrepreneurship in under developing countries framing Pakistan. Descriptive research design was considered the most appropriate to fulfill the desired objectives that is also followed by the empirical research studies of similar nature. Keeping in mind the efficiency and cost effectiveness, quantitative research approach was adopted (Runciman, 2002) to identify the factors restricting growth of female entrepreneurship in Pakistan. Survey questionnaire is widely used tool to gather data for a quantitative descriptive research study as it tends to quantify results that can easily be empirically evaluated. (Bryman & Bell, 2015)

Secondary sources are used to gather certain theoretical and financial data including research surveys and financial reports of economic surveys, statistical bulletins and World Bank. The primary source includes females themselves. Questionnaires were filled in by the females to identify barriers and also to evaluate the effectiveness of pure/ virtual business for them. Other than the demographics data, the questionnaire consists of two major portions. First part aims to identify the impediments in their growth as female entrepreneurs, whereas the second





part gathered females viewpoint about the suitability of a virtual business for the growth of female entrepreneurship

## Results

The results were analyzed on the basis of descriptive statistics and non-parametric binomial distribution. The data was gathered from qualified females with minimum of graduation/ bachelors degree. It was found that a huge gap exists between the actual and desired status in life of females. Out of the respondents, the highest frequency was of household females and least were the entrepreneurs. Contrary to the actual status in life, majority of females desired to be entrepreneurs and minority wanted to be employees. The gap confirmed the existence of covert barriers for entrepreneurship other than lack of motivation.

All the identified barriers were found significant except recovery risk. The mean of their frequencies categorized family issues on top followed by distribution of product, access to finance, physical strength of females, labour issues due to male chauvinism in the society and risk of recovery.

The rest of questionnaire gathered females opinion about level of facilitation provided by the benefits of ebusiness to female entrepreneurship and all the benefits were found highly significant. The arrangement of benefits on the basis of their means (descending order) was flexible working hours, direct channel, home based business, automated process, low cost business and reduced risk at last.

## Findings

The above analysis reveals the fact that majority of females wants to be entrepreneurs but are unable to start a business due to family, societal or distribution channel issues. It was also observed that females always keep the well being of their family first i.e. they sacrifice thier professional career for their parents, husband or children willingly. A pure virtual business (digital product) was found to be most significant for females who are unable to go work outside their houses. This would resolve their problems and help them manage their profession/ ambition in life without sacrificyng their families.





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